

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,

foodgrains, soap, baby food and other items of daily needs have risen very high during the last one year;

(b) what are the month-end market prices of the paid commodities in important markets in the country during the last twenty months; and

(c) what are the reasons for such abnormal rise in prices and what effective measures have been taken to the dehoarding of the commodities by the unsocial trade and bringing down the prices to a reasonable level?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI V. C. SHUKLA): (a) There has been general increase in the prices of a number of essential commodities including the ones specially mentioned in the question during the past one year.

(b) Information is given in statement laid on the Table of the House. [placed in Library. See No. LT—884/80.

(c) The rise in prices has been due to the cumulative impact of several factors such as monetary and fiscal policies, unprecedented drought, increase in administered prices of several commodities and rise in import prices of several commodities including crude petrol, petroleum products and cement. The situation has been further aggravated by severe difficulties in transport and power sectors affecting production of essential commodities and their movement.

A number of measures have been taken by Government in last six months to improve the situation. The monthly releases of cereals from the Central pool, free-sale sugar and imported edible oils for sale through the public distribution system have been stepped up substantially. Import of edible oils is being continued and it has been decided to import a limited quantity of sugar. Forward trading in gur has been suspended and margins on bank advances against gur and khandsari

have been raised. There has been a significant increase in the number of fair price shops, particularly in the drought affected States. The export of goat and sheep meat has been banned. The supply of kerosene to States has been raised. Several measures have been taken to improve the movement of essential commodities by Railways.

The provisions of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the orders issued thereunder as well as the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 are being enforced by the States.

Amount Advanced by Nationalised Banks for Industrial development in Burdwan District of West Bengal

692. SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) total amount lent by the nationalised banks in the Burdwan District in West Bengal for the industrial development during the last three years; year-wise and industry-wise;

(b) total amount lent by these banks for the Rikshawpuller, Agricultural labour, Bargadar, Small Scale Units etc. during the abovementioned period; year-wise; and

(c) details in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) to (c). Data in the manner asked for is not yielded by the statistical reporting system of the Reserve Bank. Available data regarding sectoral deployment of outstanding credit of scheduled Commercial Banks in Burdwan District as at the end of December 1974 and December 1977—covering a three year period—are set out in the statement.