

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA): (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Setting up Branches of Nationalised Banks in Rural Areas of North Eastern Region States

5773. SHRI N. E. HORO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently framed any programme for setting up more branches of the nationalised banks in the rural areas of North Eastern region States to ensure credit facilities to farmers and rural craftsmen; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): (a) and (b). As at the end of December 1981, there were 822 branches of commercial banks functioning in the States and Union Territories comprising the North Eastern Region. As on that date, 319 licences/authorisations were also pending with the banks for opening offices in the Region.

The Reserve Bank of India has formulated a new commercial banks branch licensing policy for the period April, 1982 to March 1985, which aims at providing one bank branch for every 17000 people in rural and semi-urban areas. The main thrust of the policy will thus continue to be on improving banking facilities in rural areas with greater emphasis on ensuring proper spatial distribution of branches to provide comprehensive coverage for all rural areas. As per this norm, it is estimated that about 553 additional offices will be opened at rural/semi-urban centres in the North Eastern

Region under this policy. State-wise distribution is as follows:—

No. of branches estimated to be opened during 1982—1985

Assam	469
Manipur	37
Meghalaya	17
Nagaland	10
Tripura	12
Arunachal Pradesh	5
Mizoram	3

553

The State Governments have been requested to identify centres for opening bank offices in their respective States. Branch expansion programmes for the region will be finalised by the Reserve Bank of India on receipt of recommendations from State Governments.

Change in Policy of Onion Export

5374. SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that before 1981-82 private exporters were associated in the export of onions to Malaysia and Singapore;

(b) whether in 1981-82 there was a change in policy and the onion export to Malaysia and Singapore was restricted to a monopoly exporter and a monopoly buyer;

(c) whether there was a representation from 28 M.Ps of Lok Sabha about this abrupt change in the policy; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.