

Establishment of Diamond cutting and polishing Centre

898. SHRIMATI USHA PRAKASH CHOUDHARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council had urged upon Government to establish a diamond cutting and polishing centre in India and for removal of import duty on the machinery; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SINGMA): (a) and (b). No proposal has been received from the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, Bombay, for establishment of a diamond cutting and polishing centre in India and for removal of import duty on machinery in that connection. However, separately, the Council has recently submitted a proposal for import duty exemption in respect of certain items of machinery. Decision in respect of duty exemption are taken on the basis of all the relevant factors.

Shortage of small coins in Gujarat

899. SHRI R. P. GAEKWAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a shortage of small coins in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to bring improvement in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Reports about shortage of small coins in certain areas of Gujarat have been received. All efforts are being made to rush supplies consistent with stocks available. Small coins worth Rs. 11.33 lakhs have already been remitted to Reserve Bank of India, Amedabad, on an emergent basis during the last week of September, 1982 for distribution in the State.

Agreement between FICCI and Confederation of Italian Industries

900. SHRI DIGAMBER SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Italian Industries (Confindustria) have decided to form a joint business Council as per an agreement signed by the representative of FICCI and Confindustria in Rome towards the end of last month;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of this agreement;

(c) whether it is customary for the FICCI to sign such agreements with foreign countries without Government's prior approval; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) if not, whether the FICCI representative had obtained prior Government approval in this behalf and whether he had apprised Government of this formally; if so, when?

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

(b) The Protocol setting up the Indo-Italian Joint Business Council provides for direct exchange of information between businessmen of India and Italy in regard to trade and marketing situation promotion of economic, industrial and technological cooperation between India and Italian firms and examination and submission of proposals to respective governments for improving economic cooperation between the two countries.

(c) and (d). The aim of setting up Joint Business Councils is to bring the business communities of India and other countries together closely. FICCI as an Apex and representative body of Indian business and industry is encouraged to take initiative in this regard. The proposal to set up