

have surplus land with them but they do not have the working capital. why does the Government not allow them to sell their surplus land and get the working capital? If the units are allowed to sell their surplus land, they will have the working capital. The Government may consider this proposal.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: The production of yarn has been increasing. In 1991, the production of cotton yarn was 1,569 million kilograms, while in 1997-98, the production of cotton is 4,213 million kilograms. The availability of cotton is not a problem.

The hon. Member has raised another point about selling of land of the closed mills. The Government is thinking on this point and I will say that as early as possible, the Government is going to finalise the plan.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the answer given by the hon. Minister is not satisfactory. I have been in the House for the last two years and nine months. Even Shri Jalappa under the U.F. Government and the present Minister have given the same answer. I would request the hon. Minister through you to clinch the issue by calling the leaders of all the political parties by having a discussion on this issue elaborately and decide on aspects of raw materials, lack of any technology in the old mills etc.

In Andhra Pradesh, we have closed nine mills in the last two years. In my view, the Minister should call a meeting of the leaders of all the parties and discuss elaborately on these aspects. Even some Members have suggested that private people are also coming forward to purchase these mills. We should allow that. We are all going in for liberalisation policy and we are inviting even foreign investment. What is wrong in it? I would like to know whether the Government is willing to call all the floor leaders to clinch this issue.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: I have no objection in that. The existing Government is not responsible for the failure of the various strategies of the previous Government. They occurred because of the failure of the previous Government.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BASWARAJ PATIL SEDAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to say with reference to the answer given by the hon. Minister about cotton mills that the production is continuously decreasing for the last three years. 112 years old historical M.S.K. Mill of Gulbarga has been closed. Although the property of Mill amounts to Rs. three hundred crores, even then it is in a dire state. The electric supply has been disconnected. There is no electricity in

the homes of thousand of workers of the mill. The Government should revive the mill immediately if it wants to do so. Lakhs of families are facing hardships for the last three years, but the Government has not taken any decision. It would have dire consequences. I would like that the hon. Minister should give a clear answer that when the Government would take a decision in this regard?

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is right. He met me yesterday. But I want to say that where there are N.T.C. Mills, be they cotton mills or Jute mills, the workers of all these mills have taken unauthorised electricity connections in their homes. Legally it is not right, but they are our workers so all this is going on. However I will consider the views expressed by the hon. Member in this regard.

SHRI BASWARAJ PATIL SEDAM: Hon. Minister, tell what decision you will take about revival? ...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI T.R. BAALU (Madras South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether my best friend, Shri Kashiram Rana, the hon. Minister for Textiles, is aware of the fact that one Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had written a letter to the hon. Prime Minister requesting him to stop export of cotton, increase funds and working capital, take steps towards modernisation, and rehabilitate the sick mills. I want to know the reaction of the hon. Minister for Textiles in this regard.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: The letter sent by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has been received.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, he has received the letter. But I want to know his reaction on that letter.

MR. SPEAKER: You have only asked whether he has received that letter or not.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: The Government is considering the matter.

#### **Development of Tourism In North Eastern Area**

\*283. SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to restrictions, the free flow of tourists in the North East region has hampered the tourism industry of the region;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to do away with the inner line permit system and the Restricted Area permit system from the region;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which these permit systems are likely to be completely lifted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

#### **Statement**

(a) and (b) The application of Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958 in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur and the Inner Line Permit under the Bengal East Frontier Regulation of 1873 in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram have hampered the growth of the Tourism industry in these North Eastern States to some extent.

(c) to (e) Restricted Area permit system does not apply to any of the North Eastern States. The relaxation of the Protected Area Permit System in the States of Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram is a continuing process. In June/July, 1998 further relaxation in the protected Area Permit regime in the States of Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur have been made to open up selected tourist circuits/routes in these States for the promotion of tourism. The situation is reviewed from time to time keeping in view the interest of the tourism industry as well as the security and social requirements.

The Inner Line Permit system is operated by the concerned State Governments who are not in favour of doing away with this system.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Th. Chaoba Singh, you can speak in Manipuri language. Interpretation is there.

SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH: I will ask the supplementary in Manipuri language.

\*Sir, today, tourism industry has been considered as one of the biggest industries in the world. Sir, even after fifty years of Independence, there is no big industry in Manipur. Manipur situated in North-East of India is having ample scope for developing tourism industry because it is full natural beauties. Therefore, the Government should pay proper attention for the development of tourism in the region. Keeping in view this very fact, I would like to

know from the hon. Minister as to what are the projects so far taken up for the development of tourism industry in Manipur?\*

Now, I will put my further supplementaries in English.

Will the hon. Minister for Tourism further state whether the Inner Line Permit and the Restricted Area Permit system for visitors from India and abroad, which is now in force, can be removed totally from the North-East to improve the tourism industry? Sir, I have another question to ask.

MR. SPEAKER: Do not read. You may put only one supplementary now. Is the Minister also replying in Manipuri language?

SHRI OMAK APANG: Sir, my answer would be in English.

Some steps have been taken for development of tourism in the North-Eastern region. We have got an Inter-Ministerial Committee. Yesterday, with the initiative of the Minister for Civil Aviation, we had called on all the Members of Parliament from the North-Eastern region. The main problem in the North-Eastern region is the infrastructure. The Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Civil Aviation have given us full support.

As far as the RAP is concerned, it is not applicable for the North-Eastern region. The Inner Line Permit is applicable to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland. The Protected Area permit is applicable for Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. We have got the order from the Ministry of Home Affairs in this regard. The route, specially for Manipur, is given here. Sir, for this, he can straightway apply from the Overseas Office to the Chief Secretary of the Manipur Government. He may get a report on that from there.

We have planned for development of the North-Eastern region. We have found that Loktak Lake can be developed as a special tourism area. We have had a Conference with BIMSTHAL, namely, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand to open up the Asian Highway. So, I think, with that, Morey will also be in the picture and Manipur can come up in the tourism circle.

SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH: Further, what steps have been taken by the Tourism Ministry to establish tourism infrastructure to improve tourism in the North-East and in Manipur in particular with reference to the specific project? I want to know about that.

\*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Manipuri.

\*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Manipuri.

SHRI OMAK APANG: Well, what we have planned is that we are trying to shift our Regional Office from Calcutta—especially for the North-Eastern Region - to Guwahati which is a suggestion from the Member of Parliament also. Especially in respect of Manipur, we face certain problems like when people travel by road and when they have to touch Dimapur. We have asked the Home Ministry and the Government of Nagaland to give a temporary inner-land permit for people who will be travelling by road to Imphal. We have indicated the major projects in the North-East. I have mentioned about them. They are about Chumukhdima in Nagaland and then development of tourism facility at Loktak Lake, Manipur. This is one of the biggest fresh water lakes in the whole country. Development of Menchuka and then eco-tourism resort at Majuli in Assam is planned.

About prioritisation for the North-Eastern Region, for the year 1998, and then if you go back to 1997-98, you will find that for Manipur, the allocation was Rs. 186.11 crore and this year, we have raised it to Rs. 220 crore.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: Sir, through you, I want to put a question to the hon. Minister. As a whole, the tourism sector is failing in the country. On the one side, there is Jammu & Kashmir problem and on the other side there is problem in the North-Eastern Region. The emerging and growing influence of the extremist forces in the country is causing hardships to the Indian as well as the foreign tourists as a whole and they are not willing to visit the following places. But Darjeeling is a place, which is known as the Queen of the Hills, which is connected with the North-Eastern Region. But the unfortunate part is that in different headquarters of the North-Eastern Region, there are airports. I want to know whether the Government is planning to establish or is there any proposal under the consideration of the Civil Aviation Ministry to establish any airport in Darjeeling itself by which a connection can be built up. I would also like to know whether Darjeeling and the North-Eastern Region areas are inducted into the world tourist map by which more foreign tourists can come. So, I want to know about Darjeeling and the areas of North-Eastern Region.

MR. SPEAKER: This is about Darjeeling.

SHRI OMAK APANG: Sir, this is not connected with my question. But I would like to answer.

In respect of Jammu & Kashmir, this year, we have a very good response for pilgrimage tourism. But we are going very slow with promotion of tourism there. We will not like to send our tourists to a place where there is disturbance. It needs a certain clearance for such areas. The Protected Area Permit for certain areas is necessary.

When it comes to Darjeeling, this year, with the initiative from the Ministry of Tourism and the Government of West Bengal as well as the Autonomous Hill Council Darjeeling, and the Government of Sikkim they have initiated a festival called "Visit Himalayas 2000". Tourists can see the Darjeeling Hills, Sikkim and Siliguri. They have initiated a move for Bagdogra. Yesterday, a question was put to the Civil Aviation Minister about establishment of an airport at Sikkim. So, a survey team will be sent and the easy accessibility to Bagdogra airport will be established because there is some inconvenience to the public. It takes around 25 to 30 minutes to get into the Airport. We are trying to promote that area for a "Visit India Year 2000" programme. We are trying to promote this as a centre for conferences. We had a meeting yesterday. A delegation came from West Bengal, Darjeeling and Sikkim...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: Sir, I wanted to know whether any proposal for the establishment of an airport at Darjeeling is under consideration or not...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Your supplementary is not related to the main question. Please take your seat. Though it is not related to the main question, then also, the Minister has given some reply.

[*Translation*]

DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful for providing me an opportunity to ask a question on tourism. Our country lag much behind in the area of tourism. Of course, tourism has been one of the reasons for it but wrong policies of the previous Governments are also responsible for the same. Tourism provides a little share to our economy.

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Dr. Bizay Sonkar Shastri, please understand that this question is relating to development of tourism in North-Eastern States.

[*Translation*]

DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a very important question. Three pyramids of Egypt are a major source of earning for tourism there. Similarly, there are some hills in Switzerland which are a major tourist attraction. In the same way there are hills of Uttar Pradesh in our country. The economy of this region is

completely dependent on tourism. There are resources in our country from tourism point of view, but tourism is not in a very healthy state in our country.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Shastri, I will disallow your supplementary. Please put a brief question.

[Translation]

DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: We have ample resources and we can promote tourism in a way so as to help our economy to the maximum extent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what is being done by the Govt. to promote tourism. This is one part of my question.

Secondly, I would like to know whether the development of tourism does include other forms of tourism viz. common tourism, tourism connected with religious places, health academic etc. I would like to know whether the Govt. is thinking in this direction?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, will you reply?

SHRI OMAK APANG: Sir, again this is not connected with my question. Anyhow I would like to answer...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: If it is not connected to the main question and even though you are going to reply, the Chair does not permit you, Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

**Strike by Officials of I.T. , Central Excise and Customs**

\*284. SHRI MOHAN SINGH:  
SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the officials of Income Tax, Central Excise and Customs went on strike recently;

(b) if so, the demand raised by them;

(c) whether the Government are considering their demands;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the loss incurred by the Government due to the strike?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Sir, Groups 'B' and 'C' officers of the Income Tax, Central Excise and Customs were on strike from 10th November, 1998 to 12th November, 1998.

(b) The employees were demanding higher pay scales and improvement in some of the service conditions.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No final decision has been arrived at.

(e) Nil.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Group "B" and Group "C" officers of the Income Tax, Central Excise and Customs were on three day strike and yet the Government suffered no loss, as per the reply given in the part (c) by hon. Minister it somehow sounds incredible. I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to how it is possible that there was no loss to the Government even after all the officers of the said revenue earning departments were on three day strike. The news papers reports say that railway tickets of Thailand, Singapore were selling in black; people were in a hurry to bring items to India quickly without paying income tax, Central Excise tax and customs duties. However, the hon. Minister is saying that the Govt. of India did not incur any loss during these three days of strike. How is it possible? I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how much loss was suffered by the Govt. of India in terms of income tax, central excise and customs duties due to the strike of officers belonging to these departments.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in my reply that only Group "B" and "C" officers of those departments were on three days strike, but we had made alternative arrangements. Officers of other groups were deputed on harbours and airports. They carried on work during those three days. How can I give any statement about loss merely on the basis of the fact that some news-papers have published reports about such loss?

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know as to what are the demands of the officers of