

Employees Federation in their memorandum have made suggestions with regard to SFCs which inter-alia include amendment to SFCs Act, recapitalisation of SFCs, providing functional autonomy to SFCs, upgradation of skills of SFC employees and setting up of the Debt Recovery Tribunal in each State.

(g) Comprehensive amendments to the State Financial Corporation Act 1951 are under consideration before the Government.

#### LIC/GIC Premia

\*365. SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the LIC/GIC premia are one of the highest in the world;

(b) whether any country-wise comparative study has been made in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the main reasons for the high premia in the country; and

(e) the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The premium rates depend upon a number of parameters such as risk factors, investment returns, management expenses etc., which vary from country to country. No meaningful comparison is, therefore, possible.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

#### Revival Package of Working Group

\*366 SHRI ARJUN SETHI : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the revival package submitted by the Working Group in the Steel Sector to boost demand for Steel has yielded the desired results; and

(b) if so, the details of the results achieved to tide-over the recession in the Steel Industry?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK) : (a) Yes, Sir. To some extent, the implementation of some of the recommendations made by the Working Group has yielded some results in overcoming the present slow down in the steel sector.

(b) The Working Group had inter-alia recommended the following:

(i) Rationalisation of DEPB (Duty Entitlement Pass Book) rates.

(ii) To consider feasibility of converting advalorem rate of import duty into fixed duties on certain finished steel items.

(iii) Consider a combination of measures comprising levy of Special Import Duty on imports of seconds and defectives along with raising duties for certain types of steel up to World Trade Organisation bound rates.

(iv) To consider removal of imports of Seconds and Defectives below a specific floor price from OGL.

(v) To deal with cases of dumping by establishing a fast track mechanism.

(vi) Withdrawal/Waiver of Special Customs Duty of 2% +3% and Special Additional Duty of 4% on input items for the steel sector which are not available within the country.

The details of results achieved so far on the above recommendations are as under:

(i) DEPB rates for the exports of HR coils, CR coils, GP/GC sheets, colour coated sheets have been rationalised.

(ii) The Government has fixed floor prices for certain flat products of finished steel including seconds and defectives to restrict their cheap imports. As a result domestic producers of these items have been able to reduce their losses to some extent.

(iii) Reduction in input costs for steel sector was recommended by the Working Group. The special customs duty has been waived on several inputs such as coking coal (ash content < 12%), non-coking coal, metallurgical coke, ferro nickel, charge nickel and nickel oxide sinters, low silica limestone and graphite electrodes (>28"). This has helped the domestic steel industry in bringing down the cost of inputs for iron & steel making.

(iv) Strengthening of anti dumping mechanism was recommended. An Anti dumping petition filed by M/s. SAIL and M/s Essar Steel Ltd. on behalf of the domestic steel producers alleging dumping of HR Coils/Sheets/Plates from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan has been decided. The Designated Authority vide their notification dated 18th November 1998 had recommended imposition of Anti dumping duties on imports from Russia and Ukraine. The Anti Dumping Duty has since been levied w.e.f. 27.11.98.

#### Disinvestment of Public Sector Enterprises

\*367 SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there are too many agencies involved in disinvestment in Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) as pointed out by the Disinvestment Commission reacting to the proposal mooted by the Finance Secretary ;