

infrastructural and extension support to the sector through the net work of CSB units and other development schemes for encouraging adoption of modern sericulture practices for production of quality silk. Presently the North Eastern Action Plan is under implementation which inter-alia covers Assam. 14 Catalytic Development Schemes have also been approved for Assam. These schemes will be implemented in the districts of Kamrup and Nagaon where Sualkuchi and Raha are situated respectively. Moreover proposals to implement an integrated Eri and Muga Project in Assam is under consideration in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development. This project would also cover Sualkuchi and Raha.

To meet the R&D needs of the sericulture sector, the Central Silk Board has set up a net work of the units in Assam. One such unit, namely, the Demonstration and Technical Service Centre is located at Sualkuchi.

Fiscal Steps for Boosting Housing Sector

3806. SHRI KAMAL NATH :

SHRI VAIKO :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry has suggested fiscal steps for boosting housing sector;

(b) if so, the detail of the fiscal steps so suggested; and

(c) the reaction of the Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) the details of suggestions made by FICCI are as under :

- (i) Foreign investment should be permitted in real estate development.
- (ii) Accredited firms of architects with necessary experience in urban development should be given the authority for approval of building permits and issue of completion certificates.
- (iii) In large metros there is rampant misuse of property laws. These laws have no relevance and as such be scrapped.
- (iv) Deemed export status should be given to foreign exchange earners out of sales proceeds of real estates and tax benefits be allowed as available to commodity exporters.
- (v) Tax incentive for approved housing projects under Section 80 IB (10) should be amended to provide further relief to builders.

* The area limit of houses purchased for the employees should be increased from 80 Sq. mt. to 120 Sq. mt. for the purpose of depreciation @ 40 percent.

(c) In the Central Government Budget for 1999-2000 various measures have been announced to boost the housing sector. These include the following :

- * Golden Jubilee Rural Housing Finance Scheme of National Housing Bank (NHB) to target 1.25 lakh units in 1999-2000.
- * Raising Tax deduction on interest on house loans for Self-occupied houses from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 75,000.
- * Strengthening housing finance companies through liberal tax treatment of income on non-performing assets.
- * Increased depreciation allowed for business building houses for employees.
- * Changes in foreclosure laws etc. to promote housing mortgages.
- * Commercial banks to lend upto 3% of incremental deposits for housing.
- * New NHB scheme for interest rate concessions for small borrowers.
- * Tax free status to a limited amount of municipal bond every year.
- * Ceiling on built up areas for dwelling units in approved projects enjoying tax holiday under Section 80 IA of the ITA increased from 1000 Sq. ft. to 1500 sq. ft. except in Mumbai and Delhi.

Reserved Areas for Minerals

3807. SHRI GAURI SHANKER CHATURBHUI BISEN:

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the areas reserved for different undertakings of Central Government in Madhya Pradesh for various minerals as on 1.1.99;

(b) whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh has sent any proposal for declaring open areas reserved for minerals; and

(c) if so, the plan to open up the reserved areas for minerals and the time by which it is expected to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) As per provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and rules framed thereunder, mineral concessions are granted by the State Government. However, the Central Government with a view to conserving any mineral and after consultation with the State Government or vice-versa may reserve any area not already held under any prospecting licence or mining lease for undertaking prospecting or mining operation through a Government Company or Corporation owned or controlled by it, through a notification in the Official Gazettee, but Central Government does not compile the details of such areas.

(b) and (c) The State Government of Madhya Pradesh furnished a proposal to the Central Government for dereservation of the areas bearing limestone, dolomite and manganese ore in the State of Madhya Pradesh. The Central Government has considered the said proposal and de-reserved majority of the areas proposed by the State Government. However, some of the areas could not be considered for dereservation for want of clarifications. Now based on the clarifications received, the remaining areas in the proposal of the State Government are under process for dereservation.

Conversion of Mills of WBAB&O Subsidiary

3808. SHRI BHARTRAHARI MAHTAB : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

- (a) the total number of units taken up by N.T.C. as WBAB&O subsidiary;
- (b) the number of units out of these are running on conversion basis;
- (c) the criteria for fixing up offset price for conversion;
- (d) the present conversion rate fixed in Orissa Cotton Mills, Chandwar;
- (e) whether there is any provision of including the maintenance money for machines in the conversion rates; and
- (f) if so, the amount has been spent for maintenance, repairs and replacement of spare parts during conversion period in Orissa Cotton Mills ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) NTC (WBAB&O) has presently under its control 16 nationalised textile mills.

(b) 10 mills under NTC (WBAB&O) are partially running on job work (conversion) basis.

(c) The subsidiary corporation enters into job work contracts with the parties offering highest rates for yarn conversion in response to open tenders invited through newspaper advertisements.

(d) At present there is no job work (conversion) activity in Orissa Cotton Mills w.e.f. 14.2.99. The job work rate for Orissa Cotton Mills from Dec.,1998 to Feb.,1999 was as follows :-

Count	Hank Yarn (Rs. per kg)	Cone Yarn (Rs.per kg)
26s	17.42	16.64
32s	21.44	20.48
40s	26.80	25.60
42s	28.14	26.88
60s	40.20	38.40

(e) and (f) The conversion rates are expected to cover the variable expenditure incurred on conversion including normal upkeep and maintenance to keep the machinery in a running condition. The expenditure incurred on maintenance and repairs of the machinery in Orissa Cotton Mills during the period 1.4.98 to 31.12.98 was Rs. 3.74 lakhs.

[Translation]

Outstanding Taxes Against Industrial Houses

3809. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

- (a) the number of Industrial Houses like Essar Group against whom more than one crore of rupees of Income tax, Excise duty, Customs Duty and other taxes are outstanding for the last several years;
- (b) the reasons for not realising the said amount; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government for the recovery of this amount and if no steps have been taken, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) In respect of income tax, demands of more than Rs.1.00 crore are outstanding in various cases belonging to 21 major industrial houses. As regards import duty, demands of over Rs. 1.00 crore were outstanding in respect of 74 companies as on 1.11.98. Excise duty demand of over Rs. 1.00 crore were outstanding in respect of about 25 companies as on 21.11.97.

(b) The main reasons for outstanding tax dues are multiplicity of litigation on the same issue, delay in final settlement of disputes, and stays granted by Courts, Tribunals, etc.

(c) The recovery of tax arrears is a continuous process, and includes charging of interest, levy of penalty, attachment of bank accounts, and attachment and sale of movable and immovable properties. Periodical reviews and monitoring of cases involving high demands, is also undertaken. Govt.