

(c) the projection for export of HCF jute bags during the current year and expected during the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The HCF jute bags on which EMA shall be provided shall conform to the international specifications as laid down in Annexure to International Jute Council documents IJO/CP(XXIX)/2 Add and I and International Cocoa Organisation document ED MEM 763 Annex I dated 6th May, 1998.

(c) The estimated export of Food Grade Jute Products during the current year is 10,000 MT. The export of HCF jute bags is estimated to increase upto 30,000 MT during the next two years and to 50,000 MT by the year 2001-2002.

Expansion Plan of NLC

2516. SHRI MADAN PATIL : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Neyveli Lignite Corporation has drawn up plans for trebling its lignite mining capacity;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the sources of funds for the expansion work;

(d) whether any agreement between NLC and State Electricity Boards in regard to financial performance has been signed; and

(e) if so, the details of said agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) and (b) Neyveli Lignite Corporation's existing lignite mining capacity as well as planned capacity during IX and X five year plans is given below :

PRESENT PROJECTS	CAPACITY (in Million Tonnes per Annum)
Mine I	7.5
Mine II	10.5
Total	18.0
Project Under Implementation	
Mine I Expansion	3
Mine IA	3
Projects Planned	
Mine II Expansion	4
Mine III	12

(c) The planned projects are to be funded by a mix of budgetary support, internal resources, and market borrowing by NLC.

(d) and (e) Bulk power purchase agreements are in operation between NLC and the Southern State Electricity Boards in respect of power supplied to them by NLC. The agreements contain formulae for fixation of power tariff, rebates as well as surcharge. The power tariff provides for a prescribed return on equity/internal resources of NLC.

Export of Flowers and Vegetables

2517. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity and value of flowers and vegetables have been exported during 1997 and 1998, country-wise;

(b) whether any allocation has been made to Kerala to step up production of Orchids and other flowers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) The quantity and value of flowers and vegetables exported during 1996-97, 1997-98 and April-November 1998 are as follows :

Year	Fresh vegetables		Flowers*	
	Quantity (MTs)	Value (Rs. cr.)	Quantity	Value (Rs. cr.)
1996-97	498863	341.16	NA	62.47
1997-98	NA	319.45	NA	78.59
1998-99	NA	193.96	NA	64.63

(Source : DGCI&S, Calcutta/APEDA) NA : Quantity Not Available.

*Includes dried flowers and planting material.

The country-wise details of exports are available in the Foreign Trade Statistics of India Monthly/Annual bulletins published by the DGCI&S, Calcutta, copies of which are placed in the Parliament Library.

(b) and (c) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is implementing a Central Sector Plan Scheme on Development of Commercial Floriculture since the Eighth Five Year Plan. It includes establishment of model floriculture centres and area expansion. The model floriculture centres are envisaged to serve as focal units in development of floriculture in the region and for introduction, multiplication and distribution of quality planting material, provision of training and demonstration on production technology and post-harvest management. Kerala is one of the Centres sanctioned during the eighth Plan. Tropical orchids and anthurium are two of the

important flowers identified for development in Kerala. Under the Scheme, Kerala has been provided Rs. 87.50 lakhs from 1992-97 to 1998-99.

[Translation]

Fifth Pay Commission

2518. SHRI MADHAV RAO PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Association of Assistant Directors (Rajbhasha), "Aeyakar Rajbhasha Sangthan" working in the Department of Income Tax has sent a representation alongwith the request to remove the discrepancies emanated due to the recommendation of Fifth Pay Commission to the Director General of Income Tax (Administration);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Assistant Director(OL) are demanding higher replacement scale of Rs. 7500-12000 in place of Rs. 6500-10000/- recommended by the 5th Pay Commission and already given to them. The demand cannot be accepted as it will have wide ramification in other cadres similarly placed.

[English]

Counter Trade Agreement

2519. SHRI C.D. GAMIT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Malaysia Government has offered to sell Palmolein to India in return for a railway project to be executed by State owned IRCON International as a part of counter trade arrangement;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) IRCON International Ltd., which has built several railway lines for KTMB, the Malaysian Railway System, had submitted a preliminary proposal in September, 1998 for construction of Tanjung Pelepas Railway Project to link new Port at Tanjung Pelepas with KTMB network against counter-trade of palm oil products. The Government of Malaysia has very recently in March, 1999 asked IRCON International Ltd. to submit

a detailed proposal. IRCON International Ltd. has yet to submit a detailed proposal in this regard.

(c) Government of India are keen to encourage increase in balanced bilateral trade in general, including through the mechanism of Counter Trade.

Financial Assistance by SDF to Private Steel Companies

2520. SHRI AJAY KUMAR S. SARNAIK : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Steel Executives Federation of India has requested to the Union Government to take speedy action on the request made by Steel Authority of India Limited for financial restructuring which primarily envisages adjustment of loans from Steel Development Fund (SDF) and Government loans to IISCO through SAIL.

(b) whether private steel companies have submitted any proposal to the Union Government seeking financial assistance through SDF route;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Loans have been granted from Steel Development Fund to Steel Authority of India Limited, Tata Iron & Steel Company Limited, Rastriya Ispat Nigam Limited and Indian Iron & Steel Company Limited for modernisation/expansion schemes of these Main Producers. The Main Producers, i.e. SAIL, TISCO, RINL and IISCO were the first generation steel producers through whom an element of surcharge (SDF levy) was collected which became the corpus of SDF. The steel produced by other steel producers in the private sector and imported steel were not subjected to the SDF levy. Recently some private steel companies have approached for loans from this fund. However, the loans from SDF continue to be recycled to the Main Producers only as per the decision of the Government in 1997.

[Translation]

Assistance to Gujarat

2521. SHRI JAYASINHJI CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of textile mills in public and private sector, separately, in Gujarat;

(b) the sector-wise number of persons working therein;

(c) the number of mills closed down in the State due to financial crisis;