

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 KADAMBUR 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;