

(a) whether the Government propose to import tea;

[*Translation*]

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to protect the domestic tea industry *vis-a-vis* people engaged in the industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Government do not propose to import tea as such. However, Government have permitted free import of tea, as one of the 2307 items from SAARC countries in order to give a fillip of Intra-regional trade.

(c) Orders and regulations under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992, safeguards built into the SAPTA agreement including Rules of Origin and the basic import duty of 10% plus other duties such as special customs duty, countervailing duty etc. are considered sufficient to protect the domestic tea industry from unfair competition.

#### **Collaboration with Newzealand**

3218. SHRI RAMPAL SINGH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether New Zealand has expressed its intention to have collaboration with India in the field of textiles;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (c) The New Zealand Minister for International Trade called on the Union Minister of Textiles in October, 1998 and *inter alia* stressed the importance of close trade ties between India and New Zealand. No specific proposal has however, been received by the Ministry of Textiles from the Govt. of New Zealand.

The Government have approved a technical/financial collaboration between an Indian Company, Atulit Impex Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta and a New Zealand Company, Corlett Corporation Ltd., Auckland for export of cotton textiles, yarns, garments and garments related items.

#### **Discretionary Quota of Ministers**

3219. SHRI RAMSHAKAL: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have fixed any discretionary quota for Ministers;

(b) if so, the details thereof, Ministry-wise;

(c) whether this quota was increased during 1997-98;

(d) if so, the details thereof, Ministry-wise;

(e) whether the Government have received any complaints regarding misuse of this discretionary quota; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

[*English*]

#### **Investment in Core and Non-core Sector**

3220. SHRI SODE RAMAIAH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government considered investment in the core sector to be important;

(b) whether the Government have been concentrating on non-core items, like tooth-paste, liquor and tobacco for foreign investment;

(c) the manner in which the Government propose to correct this lopsided slant in investments between core and non-core sectors;

(d) whether any time frame has been set up to correct this lopsided investment policy; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?