

(f) and (g) The decision to close down mines rests in the companies and is done after considering exhaustion of reserves, safety considerations and economic viability.

[English]

#### Decline in Silk Worm

3324. SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:  
SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware about the alarming decline in the population of non-mulberry silkworm races;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to save this wild silk insect;

(c) whether the steps are being taken to rear the wild silkworm, except Eri, in outdoors in a big way;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to increase the Sal forests which serves as the host for perpetuation of antheraea mylitta ecoraces only in nature?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) There has been a decline in the natural Eco-races of non-mulberry tasar silkworm due to deforestation and mining activities in some parts of the country where tasar food plants exist. In the case of muga there is only a single race. No secular indication of decline in the population of the muga silkworm race is observed. There is no decline in the case of Eri.

(b) Central Silk Board (CSB) has a Central Tasar (Research and Training Institute at Ranchi for tasar and five Regional Tasar Research Stations at Dumka (Bihar), Baripada (Orissa), Jagadapur (M.P.), Bhandara (Maharashtra) and Chinoor (A.P.) which study and conduct work on conservation of the eco-races of tasar. For muga, the CSB has set up one Regional Muga Research Station at Boko in Assam. In addition, the Central Muga Research & Training Institute is being established at Ladoigarh near Jorhat in Assam. For Eri, the Research & Training Institute is established at Mendipather in Meghalaya.

(c) and (d) CSB is implementing a project jointly with Department of Sericulture, Government of Madhya

Pradesh to arrest the decline of Raily eco-race. The project commenced in 1994-95 and involves release of 11.43 lakh seed cocoons, 9.04 lakh months and 1.50 lakh dfls. Upto June, 1998 there has been an expenditure of Rs. 26.55 lakhs.

Besides 80 MT of tasar and 40 MT of muga raw silk per annum are the incremental production targetted by the end of IXth Plan. This would involve an additional consumption of about 30 lakh dfls in tasar and 40 lakh dfls in muga by the end of IXth Plan. Both tasar and muga can be reared only outdoors.

Further, CSB has also offered various schemes in tasar and muga to States in the IXth Plan under its Catalytic Development Programmes.

(e) Sal, *Shorea robusta*, Roxb, is one of the food plants of *Antheraea mylitta*. D and is mostly in forest areas which are under the purview of Department of Forests. CSB has no schemes to increase the area under Sal.

#### Rough Ophthalmic Blanks

3325. SHRI SADASHIV RAO D. MANDLIK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the trader importers of Rough Ophthalmic Blanks (ROB) import ROB in Bulk quantities at a time in order to take advantage of our weak currency thereby bringing more pressure of our balance of payment position for storing heavy stocks to undesirable level to make maximum profit;

(b) whether the Small Scale Industrial Units producing spectacle lenses by processing ROB cannot adopt the above course of action because of their limited resources;

(c) if so, what action is proposed to be taken against the trader importers of ROB to check that the imports at a time are made within limits in order to do away with the hoarding practice adopted by them and remain in justified levels and to ensure that the monopoly of the trader importers, which are very few in numbers are not able to manipulate the market by adopting foul means and malpractices which go against the national interest and the interest of SSI Units?