

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (d) The South Indian Handloom Weavers Organising Committee through Andhra Pradesh Cheneta Karmika Samakya have sent their representation which, *inter-alia*, includes policy issues. These policy issues have been referred to the Expert Committee set up in July, 1998 for their consideration.

#### **Auto Industry**

3349. SHRI PRASAD BABURAO TANPURE: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether auto Industry has shown nil growth in terms of sale of vehicles during 1997-98; as compared to 20% growth from 1993 to 1996;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Auto Industry has asked the Government for duty cuts for all the vehicles;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to boost auto industry;

(e) whether the Government have decided to allow free import of vehicle from 2000; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government to meet the challenge of competition in auto sector?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Particularly, in the Commercial Vehicle segment, there has been sluggish demand in the last two years. The main reasons for sharp decline in production were : slump in the economy and the industry as a whole, inadequate spending on infrastructure projects, as also international recessionary trends.

(c) and (d) The Association of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (AIAM) have presented Pre-Budget memoranda, requesting for a number of concessions and incentives, including reduction in excise duty, to revive the automobile industry. The suggestions are receiving the attention of the Government.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

#### **Patent Rights from WTO**

3350. SHRI B.M. MENSINKAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the details of the Indian commodities (Ayurvedic, pulses indigenous items) seeking patent rights from WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): Patents are granted by respective Governments under their Patent Laws. The WTO does not give patent rights.

#### **Permission for Borrowings from Market**

3351. SHRI JAYSINHJI CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has sought the permission from the Union Government for borrowings from the market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Gujarat sought the permission from the Central Government for borrowings from the market which has already been given to them and the State Government has already raised the market borrowings of Rs. 514.42 crores (gross) during the current year.

[Translation]

#### **Import of Coal**

3352. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VARMA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of coking and non-coking coal imported/being imported during the last three years, till date, alongwith the various sectors, the names of the countries from which this import is being done and the rate at which this import is being done;

(b) the quantity required by the steel plants during the above period; and

(c) the requirement of coal of steel plants met from the indigenous coal mines and the quantity of coal imported for the purpose alongwith the value thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) The quantity of coking and