

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Section 91-A of the Factories Act, 1948 empowers the Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes to enter into any factory and conduct surveys into areas of safety and health. D.G.F.A.S.L.I. has been conducting surveys. His recommendations are made available to the State Governments for appropriate action at their end. The matter is also pursued through meetings with the State Government officials and Conference of Chief Inspectors of Factories.

Metal Box India Ltd.

4968. SHRIMATI KRISHNA BOSE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Metal Box India Ltd. could not be reopened in spite of the decision taken by BIFR, and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) The Industrial Credit & Investment Corporation of India Ltd. (ICICI) has reported that two units of Metal Box India Ltd. are currently under operation and no other unit has been opened subsequent to the approval of rehabilitation scheme by BIFR.

BIFR has reported that the rehabilitation scheme for revival of the company was sanctioned on 10.06.1996, however, the date of implementation of the scheme was kept in abeyance by the Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (AAIFR) on the appeals filed by Metal Box India Ltd., M/s Banque Nationale De Paris and Association of Engineering Workers of Metal Box India Ltd. The AAIFR in its Order dated 06.03.1997 has modified the scheme sanctioned by BIFR on 10.06.1996.

[Translation]

Agricultural Workers

4969. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the agriculture is the major industry of the country in which the most of the labour force is utilised;

(b) if so, whether three fourth of the number of farmers engaged in agriculture sector are small and marginal farmers who can generate more and more opportunities of employment for labour by adopting the new labour intensive agricultural technique ;

(c) if so, whether the Government have taken some effective measures to invest the new labour based agriculture technique and to utilise it for generating new and additional opportunities of employment for labour in the agriculture sector of the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the percentage of the total labour force of the country earning livelihood from agriculture sector?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (e) Agriculture is generally not classified as an industry but it provides employment to the largest number of workers in the country. It is also a fact that a large number of workers engaged in agriculture sector are small and marginal farmers and that about 67% of the total workforce in the country earn its livelihood from this sector.

The National Commission On Rural Labour in their Report submitted to the Prime Minister in 1991 have observed that mechanisation of farm operations reduces the demand for labour. However, opinion is divided on the subject and there is a conterview that mechanisation improves productivity of land and labour and in fact opens up more employment opportunities.

The problem of under employment amongst agricultural labourers is sought to be tackled through a multi-dimensional course of action viz. improvement of infrastructural facilities, diversification to non-farm activities, skill improvement, financial assistance and other developmental programmes, increased outlays for rural sector etc. The Government have taken up schemes for intensive development of infrastructure and rural industries especially those with backward linkages with agriculture. A major Programme viz. Science and Technological applications for rural development and also a scheme called Mass Employment Generation through Science and Technology (MEGST) have been taken up in addition to development of waste land and water conservation programmes.

Construction of building of Employees P.F.

4970. SHRI KASHI RAM RANA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether all the formalities have been completed to construct a building of Employees Provident Fund in Surat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the works which have been completed for the construction of this building;

(d) the efforts being made for early construction of this building;

(e) whether the Government propose to fix responsibility on any officer to hamper construction work of the building; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (f) The Work relating to planning and constuction of a building of E.P.F. at Surat was entrusted to M/s. N.B.C.C. on 14th January, 1994. However, in the meantime, a proposal for outright purchase of the building "RAJDEEP CHAMBERS" in which the Employees' Provident Fund Office, Surat is functioning at present, has been mooted. Pending finalisation of the proposal to purchase the building, the construction of own building of EPFO has been kept in abeyance.