

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto particularly when 70 blocks have been found to have arsenic content above the permissible limit of 0.05 milligram per litre while the scourge of silicosis has also aroused an alarm ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, as per information received from Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, several research and development projects have been sanctioned under Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Mission by the Government. These are as follows:-

I. R&D Projects (concluded):

(i) Sub-Mission Project on Arsenic Pollution in Ground Water in West Bengal at a project cost of Rs. 10.82 lakhs by School of Tropical. Medicines and AIH & PH in January, 1988.

(ii) Study of arsenic contamination in six districts of West Bengal at a project cost of Rs. 4.125 lakhs in March, 1994. The first phase of study has been completed by Jadavpur University, Calcutta.

(iii) R&D Project on Epidemiological study for assessing toxicity in chronic arsenic affected areas at a project cost of Rs. 4.93 lakhs approved in December, 1994. The study has been concluded by Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education & Research, Calcutta.

II. R&D Projects (ongoing):

(i) R&D Projects on control of arsenic and other chemical pollutants approved at a project cost of Rs. 2.74 lakhs. The study has been entrusted to Presidency College, Calcutta.

(ii) Development of low cost filtering medium for removal of arsenic from ground water approved by Govt. of India in 1995-96 at a project cost of Rs. 3.304 lakhs. The study has been entrusted to National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur.

(iii) Geology and geochemistry of arsenic occurrences in ground water of six districts in West Bengal approved by Government of India in March, 1996 at the project cost of Rs. 4.78 lakhs. The study has been entrusted to the Centre for Study of Man and Environment, Calcutta.

**Agriculture Development Finance Companies**

6019. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State level agriculture development finance companies are likely to be set up in Assam; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI. M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) As reported by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural

Development (NABARD), all State Governments have been requested by them to indicate their willingness to have agriculture Development Finance Companies (ADFCs) set up in their respective States having due regard to, inter-alia, available business potential in the States. However, Government of Assam has so far not responded to NABARD in the matter.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

**NABARD**

6020. SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted in any State by the National Agriculture and Rural Development Bank for setting up of agriculture based industries;

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

(c) the amount likely to be mobilised by the National Agriculture Rural Development Bank for these units ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that it has conducted one potential survey on agro-processing sector in Gujarat covering six districts of the State as well as a product study on packaging material based on agro-waste in six States.

The final reports on the survey in Gujarat contain, inter-alia, project profiles for 38 activities which have potential in the districts covered. The findings are being widely publicised among banks and concerned agencies. While the State Government is required to take necessary steps to provide infrastructure and other facilities for the identified potential in the report, the banks have been advised to incorporate the potential identified in their service area plans and make adequate provisions for assisting the entrepreneurs with loans.

The product study on packaging material based on agro-waste covered the States of Kerala, Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The study focusses on development of packaging material using locally available resources in rural areas, especially biomass and agricultural wastes, and establishment of production units in the decentralised sector. The study also identified potential for viable projects such as particle board and JRP sheets from jute sticks and craft paper and COPB boxes from cotton stalks. They would need to provide adequate credit support where necessary with refinance support from NABARD and the concerned State Governments will have to ensure infrastructural and other linkages support.

(c) NABARD has reported that no specific amount is proposed to be mobilised for the above purpose. For the identified potential in the above studies, the banks will have to provide credit support after satisfying themselves with technical feasibility and financial viability of the specific projects submitted to them. NABARD had, however, allo-