

(c) the steps taken by the Government to boost the production and export of these items?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Exports of Plantation crops have shown a mixed trend in the recent past as per the provisional export data available. While exports of tea and cardamom (small) have shown an increase/marginal increase respectively, exports of coffee have shown a declining trend in 1997-98 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

Country-wise details of exports of various commodities including plantation crops are available in the monthly publication "Foreign Trade Statistics of India" published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGC&S), Calcutta, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

(c) The Commodity Boards concerned are implementing various developmental schemes to encourage activities such as re-plantation, extension planting and research to enhance production. Steps taken to increase exports include participation in trade fairs/exhibitions abroad, conducting publicity campaigns, market surveys, holding Buyer-Seller Meets, promoting brands, etc.

Small Saving Schemes

2802. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to transfer Small Savings Mobilisation Scheme to the States; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no proposal under consideration of the Government of India to transfer Small Savings Mobilisation to the States. However, a Special Task Force chaired by Shri B. S. Shekhawat has mentioned this in their interim report. The final report of the Task Force is awaited.

Extension to Retired Officers

2803. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of retired/retiring officers of Director level in his Ministry/Department have been given extension during each of the last three years;

(b) whether the extension given to the officers was against the guidelines laid down by CCA in this regard;

(c) if so, the reasons for giving extension to them; and

(d) the amount of loss of Public exchequer suffered as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) No retired/retiring officer of Director level in the Ministry of Textiles (Proper) and its attached and subordinate offices has been given extension during the last three years.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Indian Bank Scam

2804. SHRI NARESH PUGLIA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court has directed the Union Government reinvestigate the Indian Bank scam and submit its report to them; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) A Public Interest Litigation regarding affairs of Indian Bank was filed in the Supreme Court in January, 1997. The petition prayed for several reliefs. The Supreme Court admitted the petition in February, 1997 confining only to the relief sought by way of expeditious investigation and/or adjudication, in accordance with law, of the offences disclosed by the facts mentioned in the petition. The case has been heard by the Supreme Court from time to time. While Central Bureau of Investigation has initiated investigation into irregularities in certain accounts. Indian Bank has also initiated departmental action against concerned officials for procedural lapses. The Supreme Court has fixed 21st July, 1998 as the next date for hearing of the case.

Revenue loss due to tax evasion

2805. SHRI DEVENDRA BAHADUR ROY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have estimated the amount of revenue loss-caused due to tax evasion;

(b) whether the Government have identified the Industrial/groups/institutions involved in the tax evasion;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the action likely to be taken in this regard; and

(e) the details of the major steps taken to check the tax evasion?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) No, Sir.