

(b) The target fixed for export during the current financial year provisionally is Rs. 230.00 crores.

(c) India is exporting coir products to 62 countries. The U.S.A. is the largest importer of coir products from India followed by U.K., Netherland, Germany, France etc.

Export of Meat and Its Products

2447. SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Animal Rights International has requested to set up committee to evaluate socio-economic problems arising due to export of meat and meat products;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the subsidies being paid for export of meat/meat products by APEDA or any other organisation with amounts paid to each exporter during the current financial year;

(d) whether any consignment has been rejected by importers or claimed damages for inferior quality; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Exports of meat and meat products constitute only about 3% of the meat consumed in the country. A separate assessment of socio-economic problems arising due to export of meat and meat products by a committee proposed by the Animal Rights International would, therefore, serve no useful purpose.

(c) No direct cash subsidies are being paid by the Government for export of meat and meat products. APEDA has, however, formulated various schemes such as scheme for Development of infrastructure, Scheme to promote Quality and Quality Control Upgradation of Meat plants under which financial assistance is provided to the exporters of scheduled products of APEDA including meat and meat products. APEDA has not released any financial assistance to any meat exporter during the current financial year.

(d) and (e) Exports of meat and meat products are under taken by the private exporters as per the mutually agreed terms and conditions of the export contracts. Damages, if any, claimed by the importers are settled between the exporters and importers. Details of such claims are not maintained.

However, as per the details available, the damages claimed by importers are as under:

In January, 1997 M/s. Al-Baydi Restaurants and Catering services Co., Kuwait claimed a damage of US\$ 36,830 from PML Industries Ltd., Chandigarh on account of rejection of one container of frozen meat by Kuwait Health Authorities.

In December, 1997 M/s. European Arab Trading Co., Muscat claimed a damage of US\$ 2697 from Al-Quresh Exports, Mumbai on account of receipt of part of the meat consignment as partially defrosted.

Borrowings by State Governments

2448. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Reserve Bank of India has suggested that State Government should borrow at competitive rate based on individual strength;

(b) if so, the details of the suggestions made;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) whether the State Governments have been consulted on the RBI's suggestions; and

(e) if so, the reactions of each of the State Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) In the meeting of the Finance Secretaries of State Governments held at the Reserve Bank on November 8, 1997, a consensus was reached that over a period of time all the State Governments should move over to a flexible approach to market borrowing in terms of method, timing and maturities.

(b) It was agreed that State Governments could be provided the option of raising resources in a flexible manner within the approved borrowing programme with a minimum (floor) of 5 percent and a maximum (ceiling) of 35 percent in 1998-99.

(c) The proposal of the flexible approach of borrowing a part of the amount allocated to the individual States in the range of 5 percent (minimum) and 35 percent (maximum) on optional basis has concurrence of Government of India.

(d) and (e) The suggestion has emanated in the meeting of State Finance Secretaries, as indicated in reply to (a).

Sweepers of RRB

2449. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the benefits of Payment of Bonus Act and Employees Provident Fund Act are being extended to sweepers now working in many offices of Regional Rural Banks on monthly or daily fixed wage basis; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSION