

dumping of float glass from Indonesia and this petition was closed on 29.05.98 for inadequacy of information.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Retirement age in PSUs

4509. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had considered overall impact on the employment situation in general and unemployed youths in particular before raising the retirement of the employees of Public Sector Undertakings to 60 years;

(b) if so, the assessment made by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL) : (a) to (c) The Government has taken into account all relevant aspects before deciding to increase the age of retirement of employees of Central Government and Central Public Sector Undertakings. As there is no one-to-one relationship between the increase in age of retirement and the employment situation, several vacancies would continue to be available even after the increase in the age of retirement to fill posts considered functionally necessary. Further, the opening of several sectors of industry to private entrepreneurs would have positive impact on unemployment scenario and the focus would now shift from Public Sector to Private Sector.

Cotton price

4510. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that middlemen are not giving remunerative price to cotton growers especially in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the price of cotton fixed by the Cotton Corporation of India and the price at which the cotton farmers are selling their produce in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the measures proposed to be taken to help the distressed cotton farmers and save them from the clutches of middlemen?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) Cotton is generally sold in open auction in market yards where the agencies, namely State Marketing Federations and the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) participate. As a result the cotton prices in the market yards become competitive.

(b) and (c) The price of cotton is dependent on the demand and supply situation. The CCI does not fix the price.

However, the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of the basic varieties of cotton are fixed by the Ministry of Agriculture, based on the recommendations of the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices. The prices paid by the CCI this year have been generally higher than those of last year. These have also been above the MSP levels by 14% to 70%.

Tea export to Russia

4511. SHRI A.F. GOLAM OSMANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of tea to Russia has declined during the current year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial steps taken to boost the export of tea during the current year ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government and the Tea Board constantly analyse country wise exports of tea giving special attention to areas offering potential. Tea Board also acts to remove bottlenecks in exports to individual markets whenever these are noticed.

Other steps taken to increase exports of Indian tea include (i) participation in major trade fairs/exhibitions abroad; (ii) media campaigns to increase consumer awareness of speciality of Indian tea and campaigns to popularise the Tea Board marketing symbol which stands for pure Indian tea.

Textile Workers Relief Fund

4512. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the details of supposed benefits enjoyed by the workers of State Public Sector Textile Mills which prompted the Government to deprive them from getting relief under the Textile Workers Relief Fund Scheme while the private sector closed mills workers are getting benefits of the said Scheme;

(b) whether the Government are aware that none of the workers of such closed mills were entitled/given any of the such benefits; and

(c) if so, the justification for this apathy towards these workers and the steps taken by the Government to implement this scheme in a proper perspective?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (c) Since its inception, benefits under the Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund Scheme have been extended by the Government to mills in the private sector only.