

**Forged Cheques**

2797. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some organised groups dupe banks of lakhs and crores of rupees by withdrawing money through forged cheques;

(b) if so, the number of such cases have come to light during the last three years, bank-wise; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (c) The Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Salt Industry**

2798. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that with the advent of iodised salt as a part of the campaign for prevention of goitre and other diseases arising from lack of iodine as an essential ingredient for human nutrition, a large number of small producers of salt have been thrown out of employment;

(b) if so, the total number of persons affected as a result thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for making alternative arrangements for the affected persons?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) No, Sir. With the advent of iodised salt as a part of campaign for prevention of goitre and other diseases arising from lack of iodine as an essential ingredient for human nutrition, the small producers of salt have not been thrown out of employment. In fact iodisation of salt has created additional employment for the workers.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

**Anti-Poverty Funds**

2799. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has pointed out that India has misused the anti-poverty funds;

(b) if so, whether the Bank has called upon India to urgently develop a new anti-poverty strategy;

(c) whether the World Bank has also pointed out that while the number of poor people has reduced sharply in East Asia, progress in India has been slow; and

(d) if so, the steps the Government propose to take to utilise properly the World Bank loan for anti-poverty programmes?

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

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes. World Bank has pointed out that poverty in East Asia fell more sharply than in India.

(d) India has taken steps to invest more infrastructure and human resources in order to reduce poverty and utilize World Bank loan.

**Audit of Public Sector banks**

2800. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Reserve Bank of India for adopting a second line of inspection and cross examination methodology in conducting branch of central statutory audits of different public sector commercial banks of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the RBI had prepared a list of audit firms throughout the country which were entrusted to conduct the audit;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) to what extent RBI has been successful in checking irregularities in PSU Banks in the country?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) As reported by Reserve Bank of India (RBI), off-site monitoring in addition to on-site annual inspection of public sector commercial banks has already been introduced. For the purpose of off-site monitoring half-yearly data is collected from banks, scrutinised and findings are taken up with the banks. Audit Committee of Board of Directors have also been formed in the banks to oversee audit, inspection and compliance functions in the bank. RBI has, however, informed that there is no proposal to introduce the system of cross-examination methodology in conducting branch or central statutory audit of different public sector commercial banks.

(c) and (d) As per the system obtaining the panel of audit firms for conducting statutory central audit of the public sector banks in drawn from the list of eligible firms prepared by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. The panel is finalised in consultation with the Standing Advisory Committee and with the concurrence of the Government. The panel of Chartered Accountants firms is recommended to the concerned banks who appoint the Chartered Accountant firms with the approval of their