

(c) whether Indian Scientists in large numbers are engaged in such patenting work abroad;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government are contemplating to take effective steps to free the patented products from American laws; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) and (b) Patents cannot be granted for plants like Neem and Turmeric nor can they be granted for substances which are already in the public domain. Patents are granted by countries under their respective laws. The rights granted to the patentees are restricted to the territory of that country.

(c) and (d) It is difficult to have precise information in this regard.

(e) and (f) Whenever information is received about patents being taken on certain products which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of patent can be challenged. When sufficient material is gathered, steps are taken for filing a petition for re-examination and ultimate revocation of patent in that country.

[Translation]

Closure of CCI Units

*156. SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA :

SHRI BASWARAJ PATIL SEDAM :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of units of Cement Corporation of India functioning in the Country;

(b) the number of units out of these closed down during 1987 to 1997;

(c) the reasons for their closure; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for their revival?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) 10

(b) None.

(c) Not Applicable.

(d) CCI was referred to Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in 1996. BIFR appointed Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) as Operating Agency and directed it to prepare a revival package. The revival package prepared by Operating Agency is under the consideration of BIFR.

Profit earned by IDBI

*157. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has earned profit during 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the non-performing assets of the Bank have also increased during that period;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which it was more than the previous year;

(e) the percentage of the total value of non-performing assets as compared to the total loan advanced during 1997-98; and

(f) the steps being taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The profit after tax of Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) for the year ended 31st March, 1998, was Rs. 1501.29 crore.

(c) to (e) Non-performing assets (NPAs) as a percentage of IDBI's loan and other assistance portfolio declined marginally from 10.3% in 1996-97 to 10.1% in 1997-98 but in absolute terms NPAs increased by Rs. 735.7 crore in 1997-98 over 1996-97 levels.

(f) IDBI has reported that concerted efforts were made during the year to recover its dues from assisted units. IDBI has set up special recovery cells both at Head Office and Zonal/Branch Offices. Recovery performance is also being closely monitored by Credit Committee at Head Office and Zonal Committees at Zonal Level. This has enabled IDBI to contain