

1997-98 and 1998-99 (till February, 1999), a total quantity of 1.81 lakh MTs, 1.79 lakh MTs and 1.52 lakh MTs of coffee earning foreign exchange of US \$ 451 Mn, US \$ 477 Mn and US \$ 318 Mn respectively has been exported. The major countries to which Indian coffee has been exported are Russian Federation, Italy, Germany, USA, Japan, Middle East countries, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Slovenia, Belgium.

(f) and (g) The Coffee Exports have given various suggestions like upgradation of quality controls, improvement of processing system, simplification of export documentation and procedures, exemption from various taxes and levies, development of logo for promotion of coffee etc. Action on most of the suggestions has already been taken by the Coffee Board.

(h) For increasing coffee production, the Coffee Board, besides operating several plan programmes and developmental activities aimed at intensive cultivation, replanting programme, quality improvement programme and water augmentation programme has also been providing necessary support in the form of (a) agricultural research, (b) extension, (c) arrangement for credit and finance and other necessary back-up support like supply of seeds for plantation purposes etc.

For boosting export of coffee, the Coffee Board is focussing on targetted import markets like USA, Japan, Russia, Middle-east countries etc. The Board also participates in selected food fairs, exhibitions abroad, releases advertisements on unique features on Indian coffee in selected overseas trade journals, sponsors trade delegations/invites delegations of roasters from all the target markets to India, arranges service of Indian Coffee abroad through our embassies, distributes gift packets of Indian Coffee through Indian Embassies on special occasions and festivals, promotes logo for Indian Coffee and publishes and distributes literature on Indian Coffee.

Financial Problems in Cement Industry

*157. SHRI R.S. GAVAI :
DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is disparity in prices and the demand-supply imbalance in cement in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether cement industry is facing financial problems in their capacity expansion programmes;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to provide financial assistance to cement industry?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Inter-regional prices of cement vary on account of factors such as local demand and supply, distance of market from the cement producing centres, etc. On account of demand recession, at present there is a mismatch between the existing production capacity and demand for cement.

(c) and (d) Since there is excess capacity in cement industry at present, there is no major capacity expansion plan on anvil by the Cement Industry.

(e) Question does not arise.

[Translation]

P.F. Scheme

*158. SHRI BAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Provident Fund Scheme of the Government;

(b) whether Provident Fund Policy is being changed;

(c) if so, whether the changed policy would provide more benefits to the employees as compared to old one; and

(d) if so, the full details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Details of the Provident Fund Schemes of the Government are as follows:

(i) General Provident Fund

The General Provident Fund (Central Services) Rules, 1960 are applicable to pensionable Central Government servants. The minimum monthly rate of subscription is 6% of the emoluments of an employee and not more than his total emoluments. Interest is allowed at the rate of 12% per annum compounded annually. The employees