

(b) There are 14444 persons as on 31.3.1998 against whom Rs. 10 lakhs and more is outstanding as against 12616 persons as on 31.3.1997. The details of such persons are not furnished considering the voluminous nature of the data and the time and energy required for its compilation which may not be commensurate with the object sought to be achieved.

(c) to (e) The information is not readily available. The same is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House. *Encl. 205*

#### Scrapping of DEPB Scheme

1595. SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU :  
SHRI JAYARAMA I.M. SHETTY :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to scrap the Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme (DEPB) in view of its misuse;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the exporters have urged the Government to introduce other similar scheme before its scrapping; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (d) There is no proposal to scrap the Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme. *205-06*

#### Introduction of Insurance of Pilgrims to Hazardous Places *Tourism*

1596. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE :  
SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to introduce a Scheme for granting insurance cover to those undertaking pilgrimage to hazardous places or through hazardous routes; and

(b) if so, the details of the scheme?

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) and (b) There is no proposal to introduce a specific insurance cover for those undertaking pilgrimage to hazardous places or through hazardous routes. The four subsidiary companies of the General Insurance Corporation of India are already issuing Personal Accident policies covering accidents and illnesses during travel. The cover operates from the date of travel upto actual return, on a 24 hours basis. Pilgrims can also avail of such policies for the duration of pilgrimage. *205-06*

#### Export to European and American Markets

1597. SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the consumption of goods made in India is less than Chinese goods in European and American markets;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to improve the quality of Indian goods?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The data of Indian and Chinese exports to USA and European Union during the year 1998 are as follows:—

|                             | Indian Exports | Chinese Exports |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| To USA (during Jan-Dec, 98) | US\$ 8.225 b.  | US\$ 71.156 b.  |
| To EU (during Jan-July, 98) | ECU 6.01 b.    | ECU 23.52 b.    |

(c) The upgradation and maintenance of quality of

upgradation in terms of capital goods, technology, packaging, labelling etc. Besides, special entitlements are permitted to the manufacturers attaining the ISO status. The other measures taken in this regard include arranging training to industry personnel, arranging seminars and workshops to educate manufacturers and exporters on quality management, dissemination of information relating to quality aspects of our export markets, quality checks on specific manufactured items of export interest, helping individual manufacturing units in upgradation of quality system, etc. Government has also recognised 21 private inspection agencies and 8 Government inspection agencies to supplement the work of quality certification. 15 Agencies have also been recognised for fumigation of export cargo.

#### Inscription of "OM" on One Rupee Coin

1598. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the inscription "OM" appears on the reverse side of one rupee coins under figure giving the year particularly the year 1997;

(b) if so, the significance of this inscription;

(c) whether the Government propose to withdraw this inscription from the coins as also to withdraw all coins with such inscription; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (d) The Government has not issued any coin with the inscription "OM" and, therefore, the question of withdrawal of such coins does not arise. However, Mints all over the world inscribe the symbol of their Mint on coins made by them. One Rupee coins imported in 1997 from Mexico bear the symbol of the Mexican Mint, which is "M".

[Translation]

#### New Insurance Scheme for Handloom Sector

1599. SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of handloom weavers benefitted under the New Insurance Scheme during 1997-98;

(b) whether the survey work is going on to speed up the process; and

(c) if so, the number of weavers likely to be benefitted in the country under the Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) 60,453 weavers benefitted under the Insurance Scheme during 1997-98. Chief Minister of States have been requested to ensure greater participation for benefit of weavers.

(b) A Handloom Census has been undertaken by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi for the Government of India. The work is under progress.

(c) The State Governments implement this scheme as per the requirements of the weavers and the guidelines of the scheme.

[English]

#### Problems Faced by Public Sector Enterprises

1600. SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have received any request from the Government of Kerala for examining the problems faced by Kerala Minerals and Metals Limited and Travancore Titanium Products Ltd;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to save these prestigious Public Sector Enterprises?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Prior to the presentation of Union Budget for 1999-2000. Titanium Dioxide attracted customs duty @ 45% *ad valorem* (40% basic + 5% special) which was higher than the peak rate of duty of 35% *ad valorem* applicable to chemicals, in general. Owing to the lowering of the peak rate of customs duty from 45% to 40% in this Budget. It was not found feasible to increase duty on this product to 50%, as requested by the State Government. With the reduction in peak. Titanium dioxide attracts a duty of 40% w.e.f. 28.2.1999 besides Special Additional Duty @ 4% and countervailing duty of 16% *ad valorem*.