

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*.