

have convened a meeting of the Customs and Excise Officers. We have made it very clear to these officials that they must deal with the culprits without any fear or favour and strict action should be taken. We have told them to tone up the Administration and if there are any persons who are lethargic or inefficient, they should be weeded out and efficient, and more vigilant personnel should replace them to show results.

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : In reply to my supplementary, the hon. Minister has told us that his Ministry has clearly advised the Customs and other people about the action to be taken. Now, Sir, the present Government under the leadership of our beloved Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, has committed itself to a clean administration and to eradicate corruption from our public life. May I know from the Minister the action which is going to be taken so that these types of smuggling and rackets will not go on? What action is taken to see that such foreign currency may not come into our country? I want to know what is the action they have already taken and what is the action which they propose to take in future.

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : I have already answered it.

SHRI MOHAN BHAI PATEL : How many persons have been detected and what action was taken against each of them?

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY : To this question also, I have already given my reply. This was already answered.

[Translation]

Central Assistance for Development Schemes in Hill Areas

*109. **SHRI HARISH RAWAT :** Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether in the draft Seventh Five

Year Plan, the Planning Commission has provided for special central assistance on cent percent grant basis for implementation of development schemes in hill areas in the country ; and

(b) whether the draft plan also provides for relaxation in the norms presently laid down for expansion of communication, transport, bank and other facilities in respect of these areas ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN) : (a) and (b) The Draft Seventh Five Year Plan is yet to be prepared.

MR. SPEAKER : The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Recovery of Excise Duty arrears from Tyre Industry

*97. **SHRI K.T. KOSALRAM :** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the steps being taken to recover the excise duty arrears particularly from tyre industry after the judgement of the Supreme Court on post-manufacturing expenses ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : The Supreme Court passed an order on the question of inclusion of post manufacturing expenses in the assessable value under section 4 of the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944, in May 1983 and pronounced a detailed judgement on the subject in October, 1983. It was mentioned in the judgement, *inter alia* that the individual appeals, writ petitions, special leave petitions and transferred

cases would be listed for appropriate orders in the light of the judgement.

For the recovery of the amounts of Central Excise duty in cases of pending assessments, the steps initiated were for finalisation of pending assessments by the Collectorates of Central Excise, moving the judicial and quasi-judicial authorities before whom cases were pending, for deciding them in the light of the Supreme Court judgement and moving the Supreme Court for giving decisions in individual cases etc. referred to above.

In those cases where pending assessments were finalised in terms of the Supreme Court judgement, steps were also initiated for realisation of the final duty amounts due.

No individual case having a bearing on post manufacturing expenses pertaining to the tyre industry has yet been decided by the Supreme Court or the High Courts.

Decline in wholesale Price Index

*98 SHRI V.S. VIJAYARAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a downward trend in the wholesale price index during the last one year;

(b) if so, the percentage of decline; and

(c) the steps being taken to ensure that the downward trend continues ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE AND SUPPLY (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH) : (a) to (c). The level of Wholesale Price Index (1970-71=100) was 337.6 (provisional) on 5th January 1985 compared with the level of 321.0 on 7th January 1984. The annual rate of inflation on 5th January 1985 was 5.2 per cent as compared to 10.6 per cent at the

same time last year. Government keeps a close watch over the price situation and takes such measures as are necessary to keep the prices under reasonable control. In particular, steps have been taken to build up the buffer stock of foodgrains, ensure adequate availability of other sensitive commodities such as sugar and edible oils, and restrain the expansion of aggregate demand in the economy.

U.S. Military Presence in Indian Ocean

*105. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the U.S. Military presence in the Indian Ocean has been increasing in keeping with the development and sophistication of technologies in support of antisatellite and space war; and

(b) if so, the details and Union Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO) : (a) and (b) Over a period of years there has been a general, though occasionally fluctuating, upward trend in the Naval presence of the U.S. in the Indian Ocean. Development of U.S. Naval forces in support of anti satellite and space war has not been established although the possibility cannot be ruled out.

The Government of India maintains a constant vigil over the induction of modern arms into the Indian Ocean with a view to updating its naval plans to meet emerging situations.

On the diplomatic front, Government have supported and striven for the Indian Ocean region to remain a zone of peace.

Increase in Coal Prices

*110. SHRI AMAL DATTA : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :