

[21 December, 1999]

RAJYA SABHA

Bank Branches Opened in Orissa

2069. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of branches of various commercial bank opened in Orissa and particularly in tribal districts;
- (b) the number of such banks in other States;
- (c) whether Government have any proposal to expand its branches in 1999-2000 and also in the Ninth Five year Plan; and
- (d) if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) As in September 1999, 2210 branches of commercial banks were functioning in the State of Orissa. Out of these 534 branches are functioning in district having tribal population.

(b) Total number of branches in all other State as in September 1999 is 62723.

(c) and (d) In the Extant Branch Licensing Policy of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the decision for opening branches at a particular center has been left to the discretion of the banks themselves, subject to getting prior license from RBI. In view of this, no target has been fixed for branch expansion during 1999-2000, under the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Waiver of Custom Duty on Domestic Steel Sector

2070. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether complete waiver of customs duty alongwith CVD has been extended to 18 mega power projects;
- (b) if so, whether the same has deprived the domestic steel sector of demand of three million tonnes;
- (c) whether the Steel Ministry has urged Government, as reported

in 'Business Standard' dated 19th September, 1999, to make corrections in the policies to safeguard the interest of the domestic steel industry; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is difficult to make any categorical assessment of the likely quantity of imports of steel by the mega power projects.

(c) and (d) No such news items appears to have been reported in the New Delhi edition of the Business Standard, dated 19th September, 1999. However, the steel Ministry has made certain proposals which are under examination.

High Powered Tax Revamp Committee

2071. DR. GOPAL RAO VITHAL RAO PATIL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high powered tax reforms committee, spelling out the fiscal strategy of the current Government, would be submitting its report to the Prime Minister;

(b) if so, whether the report has been submitted so far;

(c) if so, the highlights of the report; and

(d) if not, the reasons for delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) Sir, A Task Force on Tax Reforms to recommend time-bound programme of reforms of tax structure in respect of both direct and indirect taxes is still to be set up.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.