

Promotion Council was receiving grant from Marketing Development Assistance for their Code activities only. This assistance has been withdrawn w.e.f. 1st April, 1985, for the failure of the Council to comply with the guidelines issued for carrying out certain amendments in their Articles of Association.

Export of betel-leaves

225. SHRIMATI ILA BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what amount of foreign exchange India has earned from betel-leaf export during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) what are the names of the importing countries of Indian betel-leaf; and

(c) which Indian States are the principal producers of betel-leaf and what is the volume of their production?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) According to the provisional figures compiled, export of betel-leaves in the last three years has been as under:—

1982-83	Rs. 40 lakhs
1983-84	Rs. 80 lakhs
1984-85	Rs. 74 lakhs

(b) Our exports are mainly to Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, U.K. etc.

(c) Firm figures of area and production in respect of betel-leaves are not available. West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Orissa, Kerala, Bihar, U.P. and Maharashtra are the major producers of betel-leaves.

Compulsory retirement of Income-tax, Excise and Customs officials

226. SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of top officials belonging to the Central Excise

and Customs Department and Income Tax Department who were compulsorily retired during the year 1985-86 as part of anti-corruption drive;

(b) what method was adopted to ascertain the conduct of such officials; and

(c) whether any procedure has been laid down for such termination in order to avoid injustice and victimisation due to individual prejudices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) to (c) No Group 'A' officer belonging to Central Excise and Customs Department and Income-tax Department has been compulsorily retired during 1985 as a measure of penalty. However, twelve Group 'A' officers belonging to Central Excise and Customs Department and Income-tax Department have been prematurely retired under Fundamental Rule 56(j) during 1985-86. For considering cases of officers for premature retirement under the provisions of Fundamental Rule 56(i) the Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms have already laid down the procedure and that has been followed in their cases.

Seizure of Gold Biscuits at Jogeshwari in Bombay

227. SHRI RAMCHANDRA BHARADWAJ:

DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether gold biscuits of foreign markings worth Rs. 3.40 crores and Indian and foreign currency worth Rs. 1 crore were seized by the Revenue Intelligence authorities at Jogeshwari in Bombay on September 13, 1985; and

(b) if so, what is the outcome of the investigations carried out in regard to the said seizures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b)

The officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Bombay Zonal Unit, searched the premises at No. 10, Patel Building, Station Road, Jogeshwari (West), Bombay on 13-9-1985 and seized 1400 gold biscuits of foreign origin, weighing 14,000 tolas, valued at Rs. 3.35 crores, foreign currency worth Rs. 1.21 crores and Indian currency worth Rs. 21 lakhs. The total value of the seizures amounts to Rs. 4.77 crores. In this connection, three persons were arrested.

As the case is still under investigation, it will not be expedient to disclose further details at this stage.

IDA's programme for developing countries

228. SHRI RAMCHANDRA
BHARADWAJ:

DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Development Authority proposes to phase out certain developing countries like India for purposes of receiving concessional and under the IDA's programme for helping developing countries in the matter of planned economic development;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Allocation of grants to J & K

229. SHRI DHARAM CHANDER PRASHANT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the amount of Central grant allocated to the State of Jammu and

Kashmir during the year 1984-85 in various forms; and

(b) what was the allocation during the same year for State's Annual Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Central assistance amounting to Rs. 313.86 crores was allocated to the State Government for the State Plan, Central sector schemes, Centrally sponsored schemes, Natural calamities etc. during 1984-85.

(b) Of the above, Central assistance allocated for the State Plans was Rs. 260.92 crores.

Reduction of Taxation Rate

230. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to reduce the taxation rate and also to simplify the tax structure; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) As regards direct taxes there is no proposal under Government's consideration to reduce the tax rate. However, a Committee consisting of 16 Commissioners of Income Tax was set up in July, 1985 for simplification and rationalisation of direct taxes law. The Committee have formulated about 800 proposals out of which after discussion 600 proposals have been accepted for further consideration. The proposals finally approved by the Government will be incorporated in a comprehensive Direct Taxes (Amendment) Bill.

As regards indirect taxes, it may be stated that in the context of the long term fiscal Policy about to be announced by Government, exercises have been undertaken to review the rate structure of Customs & Excise duties and to simplify the