

(c) if so, whether Government propose to constitute any Committee of experts to go into the question and to suggest ways and means in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The Reserve Bank of India in its report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India for the year ending June 1984, has indicated improving profitability as one of the medium term tasks before the Banks.

(b) and (c) Measures to improve the profitability of banks and to sustain their viability are under continuous review of both Government and the Reserve Bank of India. No Committee is proposed to be set up at present.

Setting up of State Planning Boards

199. SHRI SHRIKANT VERMA: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government have directed State Governments to set up State Planning Boards;

(b) if so, what is the response of State Governments thereto; and

(c) what steps the Central Government propose to take to decentralise planning set-up in the States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) A suggestion was made by the Planning Commission to the States as early as in 1971 to set up State Planning Boards.

(b) All State Governments, excepting Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim have set up Planning bodies known variously as State Planning Commission, State Planning Board or State Development Board. The Sikkim Government has indicated its inability to set up such a Planning Board. The Jammu & Kashmir Government has agreed to set up as apex planning body called the State Policy and Planning Council.

(c) Central Government has always favoured the idea of decentralising planning and had time and again advised the State Governments to take necessary steps

in this direction. To facilitate this the Centrally-Sponsored scheme of strengthening of State planning machinery has been extended to district level and the expenditure on the district level planning machinery is now sharable between the Centre and the States equally. A number of States have taken advantage of this to set up some planning machinery at district level already.

Setting up of a Steel Project in Bhandara in Maharashtra

200. SHRI S. W. DHABE: Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bhoomi Pooja ceremony for the setting up of a Steel Project in Bhandara district of Maharashtra State was performed on the 16th November, 1984 by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra and in the presence of Shri N. K. P. Salve, the then Minister of Steel and Mines;

(b) if so, what will be the estimated cost of the project;

(c) by when it is likely to start production; and

(d) what is the number of persons likely to get jobs in the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI S. K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) to (d) Presumably the Hon'ble Member is referring to the steel project of M/s. Sunflag Iron & Steel Co. Ltd. for which a Bhoomi Puja was held on 16th November, 1984. Approximate cost of the Project indicated by the company is expected to be about Rs. 175 crores. The Project is likely to be commissioned in early 1988. The Project when completed is expected to provide direct employment to about 1000 persons.

Development of Wardha district on Gandhian Lines

201. SHRI S. W. DHABE: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved any plan to develop Wardha district in Maharashtra State on Gandhian lines;

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

(c) what is the amount sanctioned and what will be the period of its execution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Loans advanced to farmers

202. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the amount of money advanced to farm sector in the country by the nationalised banks as loans during the last two years;

(b) what is the amount of loan advanced to poor farmers, middle class farmers and rich farmers during the above period; and

(c) what is the amount of loan recovered so far from them and the amount still to be recovered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) According to available information the total outstanding agricultural advances of public sector banks stood at Rs. 5106 crores as at the end of December, 1982 and Rs. 6053 crores as at the end of December, 1983. (Provisional).

(b) The present data reporting system does not yield information in the desired form. However it may be pointed out that for helping the poorest of the poor in rural areas the Government have launched Integrated Rural Development Programme. During 1982-83 and 1983-84 the total term credit disbursed by all the financial institutions under the Programme aggregated to Rs. 713.98 crores and Rs. 773.51 crores

respectively. Furthermore for assisting a large number of poor persons under the New 20 Point Programme a concept of 'Weaker Section' has been evolved within the priority sector. This includes small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, tenant farmers/share croppers, artisans, village and cottage industries, SC/STs and beneficiaries of Integrated Rural Development Programme and Differential Rate of Interest Scheme. Public Sector Banks have been advised to ensure that by the end of March, 1985, 25 per cent of their total lendings to the priority sector should go to the weaker sections. Provisional data available indicate that as at the end of June, 1984, advances granted to weaker sections aggregated to Rs. 3227 crores which constituted 21 per cent of the total priority sector lendings of the public sector banks.

(c) According to provisional data available the percentage of recovery to demand as at the end of June, 1983 in respect of direct agricultural advances of public sector banks was 53.3.

RBI report on Economy and Prices

203. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered the latest RBI report on economy and prices according to which income-prices gap is yawning; if so, what are the details of the report; and

(b) what action Government propose to take to check this trend?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE AND SUPPLY (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) Presumably the Hon'ble Member is referring to the Annual Report of the RBI for the year 1983-84. There is no mention in the Report that the income-prices gap is yawning.

(b) Does not arise.