

tion has been shifted elsewhere and his place has been filled by a non-scheduled caste officer; and

(d) if so, what were the circumstances that necessitated his shifting and to what extent the interests of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe employees in the Ministry has been affected thereby?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT AND TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The strength of the Cell was reviewed and a post of Lower Division Clerk was sanctioned in addition to the Assistant already working.

(c) and (d) Incumbents in Secretariat posts like Under Secretary, Deputy Secretary, etc. are transferable.

The Under Secretary who had held the post for four years had been transferred to another post in the Ministry on 24-5-80. However, the overall in charge of the SCT Cell is the Liaison Officer who is an officer of the rank of Deputy Secretary and there is no change in this regard.

Foreign offices maintained by the State Trading Corporation of India

***95. SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1322 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st July, 1980 and state:

(a) whether the foreign offices of the State Trading Corporation have defined areas of operation;

(b) whether the S.T.C. maintains country-wise records of its business turnover;

(c) if so, what is the break up of the annual turnover for the years 1977-78, 1978-79 and 1979-80 in terms of the country or group of countries served by each foreign office;

(d) what is the percentage of India's trade with these countries/group of

countries that the S.T.C. brought about during those years; and

(e) what is the average profit/loss made/incurred by the S.T.C. on its trade operations during these years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix CXV, annexure No. 23].

Deposits from the Public by SAIL

***96. SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:**
SHRI M. KALYANA SUNDARAM:

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public sector companies led by the Steel Authority of India Limited are going in for funnelling deposits from the public in a big way; and

(b) if so, what are the details and reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) As a part of the measures to step up investment in the public sector, it has been decided to adopt an innovative approach to the problem of mobilising resources for sustaining such investment and accordingly, certain selected public sector units have been allowed to raise public deposits under the Companies (Acceptance of Deposits) Rules, 1975. When this scheme makes headway, dependence of these public sector enterprises on budgetary support is expected to get reduced. In pursuance of this decision, Steel Authority of India Limited,

among others, has been permitted to raise deposits from the public. The rates of interest on the deposits would be comparable to those offered by the best private sector companies. The scheme provides for half-per cent higher interest to employees and ex-employees of the public sector units.

*97. [Transferred to the 6th August, 1980.]

Value of the Rupee

*98. SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the value of the rupee has gone down during the last six months;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what has been the value of the rupee during the years 1967, 1971, 1977 and 1980 as compared with 1947 as the base year?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) to (c) A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement

The value of Rupee measured as the reciprocal of the All-India Industrial Workers' Consumer Price Index (1960-100), has declined from 26.74 paise in December 1979 to 26.18 paise in May 1980 (the latest available). The month-wise details are given below:

Month	Value of Rupee (paise) (1960-100)
December, 1979	26.74
January, 1980	26.95
February, 1980	27.10
March, 1980	26.81
April, 1980	26.67
May, 1980	26.18

The decline in the value of the rupee is synonymous with the rise in consumer price index. The uptrend in consumer price index is noticeable since March, 1979. The important items

which may have contributed to this increase in consumer prices during the last 5 months are sugar, gur, edible oils. The rise in consumer prices is the continuation of the inflationary trends in evidence since the beginning of 1979-80 and also reflects the impact of seasonal factors.

The value of the rupee in terms of the Consumer Price Index (adjusted to 1947 as base) works out to 41.63 paise for 1967; 37.83 paise for 1971 and 22.31 paise for 1977. The average for the first 5 months of 1980 for which data are available works out to 19.16 paise.

Import of plastic off-cuts

*99. SHRI KHUSHWANT SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether plastic off-cuts such as cellulose acetate, acrylics are imported;

(b) if so, what is the quantity imported during the years 1978-79 and 1979-80;

(c) whether there is any definition for such an "off-cut";

(d) whether the off-cuts imported are of large sizes so as to be classified as sheets;

(e) whether these off-cuts are imported on weight basis at a lesser value than sheets which, if imported, are priced on a piece basis;

(f) whether the import duty is the same on both sheets and off-cuts;

(g) whether there is heavy loss of revenue to Government by way of loss in customs duty if large size sheets are imported as off-cuts; and

(h) if the answers to parts (a) to (g) above be in the affirmative, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (h) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.