

budget of the Company keeping in view the nature of its activities and other relevant factors. The Board of Directors nominate the officers of the Corporations who may operate on the entertainment budget and also the limits upto which each officer may incur expenses in this regard. All such entertainment expenditure has to be supported by proper bills and vouchers or certificates. A statement of expenditure incurred on entertainment has to be placed periodically before the Board of Directors for its information. Recently Government have reviewed these guidelines in the context of the need for austerity and specified certain monetary limits of expenditure per guest.

Credit facilities for jute growers

126. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH
SURJEET:
SHRI N. P. CHENGALRAYA
NAIDU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that loans at a lower rate of interest are made available to jute magnates for capital investment for modernisation, diversification and expansion of jute industry but no credit facilities are available to the poor jute growers;

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

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to extend credit facilities at a lower rate of interest to the jute growers?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) and (b) Financial Institutions provide need based credit to jute Mills at rates of interest prevalent from time to time. Credit is also made available to jute growers at concessional rate of interest as they form part of the neglected sector. Besides, small and marginal farmers are sanctioned loans at 4 per cent rate of interest, provided, they

fulfil the eligibility criteria under the differential Rates of Interest Scheme.

(c) Banks have drawn up a number of schemes for financing cultivators and jute growers can also avail of credit facilities under these schemes.

Price of tobacco

127. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH
SURJEET: Will the Minister of COM-
MERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-
OPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the price of tobacco during the current year as compared to the price last year;

(b) what steps Government have taken to ensure a fair-price to help the growers; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to ensure that the benefit of fair-price also reaches the growers in the remote areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG): (a) The tobacco prices this year have generally ruled low as compared to last year, as indicated in the statement attached.

(b) Programmes for procurement of 10,000 tonnes of Virginia tobacco and 25,000 tonnes of non-virginia tobacco have been undertaken by the Government this year through the State Trading Corporation of India Limited (STC) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED), respectively.

(c) The procurement has been undertaken in the interest of the growers. The STC are, therefore, making purchases through Cooperatives/ Syndicates/Associations of the growers and NAFED are also making purchases through the State Cooperative Marketing Federations. The Government hope that under these arrangements, farmers in remote areas will also be benefited.