

REPATRIATION OF SICK PRISONERS OF WAR

558. SHRIMATI SITA DEVI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of sick Indian prisoners of war repatriated from Pakistan as against the sick Pakistan prisoners of war repatriated to that country so far; and

(b) the number of sick Indian prisoners of war, if any, still awaiting their repatriation to India and the steps taken by Government to get these persons repatriated ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM) :

(a) Indian prisoners . . . 28 (Including one repatriated from civilian) Pakistan.

Pakistan prisoners . . . 299 (Including repatriated to fifteen civilians) Pakistan.

(b) According to reports received from International Committee of Red Cross, there are no more seriously sick and wounded Indian prisoners of war eligible for repatriation. However, Government of India is pursuing the matter with them.

SEIZURE OF GOLD AT PALAM AIRPORT

559. SHRIMATI SITA DEVI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether customs authorities seized some Gold at Palam Airport on June 24, 1972; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN) : (a) and (b) On 24th June, 1972 acting on prior information, Customs Officers at Palam airport searched two Germans, who came by B.O.A.C. flight No. BA 920 and recovered from each one of them 250 gold bars with foreign markings in all weighing 58 Kgs. They were carrying the gold bars in specially made cotton jackets worn by them under their shirts. Both the persons were arrested and produced before duty Magistrate, who remanded them to Customs custody upto 28th June, 1972. They were again produced before the Magistrate and were remanded to judicial lock up and they still continue to be in judicial custody.

INCOME-TAX ARREARS IN PUNJAB

560. SHRIMATI SITA DEVI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the names of the first Fifty parties against whom maximum amount of Income-tax arrears is outstanding at present in the State of Punjab;

(b) the amount of Income-tax due in each case; and

(c) the steps so far taken by Government to recover the same and the result thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRIMATI SUSHILA ROHATGI) : (a) to (c) The requisite information as on 31.3.1972 is being collected and the same will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

HIGHEST INCOME SLAB

561. SARDAR AMJAD ALI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have considered the question of highest income slab for the whole of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to ensure income parity in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI Y. B. CHAVAN) : (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) A major objective of the country's Five Year Plans has been to secure rapid economic development, generate larger employment, reduce disparities in income and wealth and move towards economic equality and social justice. The Planning Commission's document "Towards an approach to the Fifth Plan" provides a broad outline of the direction along which national effort may have to be made in the course of the Fifth Plan, and stipulates, among other things, a programme for providing larger employment and incomes to the poorer sections of the population, supplemented by a national plan for the provision of social consumption in the form of education, health, nutrition, drinking water supply, housing etc. up to a minimum standard.

The Government has also taken various egalitarian measures in recent years and the totality of these measures such as the progressive increase in rates of personal taxation, step-up in the rates of wealth tax and additional wealth tax on urban land and