

(d) LIC has already initiated necessary steps to connect the remaining branches through the network.

Low growth in sales of consumer goods

2191. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that growth in sales of consumer goods this year was less than 2 per cent whereas sensex scaled highest ever; and

(b) what are Government's comments on this upward trend in Indian economy *vis-a-vis* consumer downtrend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) As per the index of industrial production, during the first half of 2005-06, consumer goods — both durables and non-durables—have maintained the impressive double-digit growth rates of the last two years. Surveys of major companies in the consumer goods sector also indicate a good performance this year. The stock markets have also shown an upward trend in the recent past. The movement of index of share prices is a function of changes in investment arising out of the perception about the economy and/or a sector or the stocks constituting the index. Besides, the movement of stock indices also depends on various domestic and international events, market sentiments, corporate performance, and the fundamentals of the economy. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is keeping a constant vigil on the markets. As a part of its surveillance activities, SEBI has taken several measures, which, *inter-alia*, include shifting of several scrips to trade-to-trade segment, imposition of circuit filters/price bands on several scrips, and advising the stock exchanges to take action wherever warranted to protect investors interest.

Loans on Higher Interest Rates to SSI

†2192. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether big companies are being providing loans on lesser

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.