

**Direct tax arrears**

1369. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the direct tax arrears have mounted to an all-time high at more than Rs. 85,000 crore;

(b) whether most of the tax demands are locked up in litigation; and

(c) whether Government are likely to approach courts for speedy disposal of tax cases and if so, whether this will entail setting up of fast-track courts specially for tax cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Yes Madam.

(c) The Government has already made it obligatory for ITAT to dispose of appeals, where stay has been granted, within 180 days of the grant of stay. Moreover, the powers of the Commissioner (Appeals) to set-aside an appeal have been withdrawn. Requests are also being regularly made to Courts for early disposal of appeals where large demands are locked up.

A proposal for creation of National Tax Tribunal is also being examined by the Government.

**Eligibility for fresh loan**

1370. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that under the existing rules farmers with outstanding loans are not eligible for fresh loans;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the funds available with bank remain unutilized because of outstanding loans against farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) There are no instruction from RBI that the farmers with outstanding loans should not be granted fresh loans. However, if a loan account has become Non-Performing Asset (NPA),