

Mobilisation of Small Savings in Rural Areas

*634 SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have taken any steps to mobilise small savings in rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Various steps taken to mobilise small savings in rural areas include:

- i) Utilisation of around 1.25,00 post offices in rural areas;
- ii) intensive publicity in rural areas;
- iii) Utilisation of infrastructure and extension services of the State Governments and the agency schemes in the rural areas;
- iv) introduction of new savings instruments like Indira Vikas Patra, and Kisan Vikas Patra, specially designed to cater to the requirements of rural population who, by and large, are not income tax payers.

(c) Does not arise.

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI: Sir, the Budget Performance Report of India shows that the average gross domestic savings have shown an improvement during the Seventh Plan, that is, 18.2 percent in 1984-85 to 21.1 percent in 1988-89 and further to 21.7 percent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the percentage of contribution from the rural areas to this improvement in gross domestic savings and

whether or not any target was set to achieve this rural savings and if so, whether or not that target was achieved.

[Translation]

SHRI DALBIR SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in response to the question of the hon. Member, I would like to tell that out of a total of 1.45 lakh post offices in the country nearly 1.25 lakh post offices are in rural areas. I do not have the complete details with me, because there are no computers in all the post offices, and all the work is being done manually. That is why the Government has not been able to classify the rural-urban areas.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the target been fulfilled or not?

SHRI DALBIR SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the main objective of the scheme is that 75 percent of the savings mobilised by the State Governments and specially by the District Authorities is passed over to the States. Under the Scheme, loans are sanctioned for 20-25 years, and this is the main object of this scheme.

[English]

SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI: The Minister has just now stated that as per the guidelines, 75 per cent of the small savings mobilised has to be invested in the same state or in the same area. I would like to know whether this has been strictly adhered to. If not, is the Government taking any action to do so in future?

[Translation]

SHRI DALBIR SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, 75 percent of the savings mobilised is passed over to the states and it is the responsibility of the State Governments to invest. The amount as per their requirements. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO

VADDE: Sir, is it a fact that a large part of the savings mobilised in the rural areas is diverted to urban areas by the Government for investment in industry and business? In view of the fact that enough capital is not being invested in rural areas, will the Government take the necessary steps to see that the amount mobilised in the rural areas is definitely utilised in those very same rural areas to provide loans and other assistance to farmers, weaker sections, agricultural labour and small entrepreneurs?

[Translation]

SHRI DALBIR SINGH: We will talk to the State Governments about the suggestions made by the hon. Member. The State Government will be requested to invest more and more funds which are mobilised through Indira Vikas Patra and Kisan Vikas Patra, in the rural areas.

Freight for Goods Transported by Ships

*635 SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT to pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a fixed freight for all goods transported by ships along the Coast;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its effect on the coastal shipping industry;

(c) whether the Government propose to relax the freight fixation formula presently being followed to revive the coastal shipping; and

(d) if so, the details there of?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) and (b). The Central Government presently exercise powers conferred by

Merchant Shipping Act to fix or revise coastal tariffs, on the advice of the Shipping Rates Advisory Board, only in respect of industrial coal and salt along the Mainland Coast at all freight and passenger tariffs between Mainland and Andamans and Lakshadweep Islands. The tariffs of other goods traffic along the coast are fixed through direct negotiations between the shipowners and shippers on a bilateral commercial basis. Director General of Shipping has been delegated powers to fix bunker surcharge for carriage of coal and salt and also to fix freight rates where no subsidy is payable by the Government. The freight rates in respect of traffic to the Andamans and Lakshadweep Islands, which involves payment of subsidy to Shipping Corporation of India, are fixed by the Government of India. There has been a sharp increase in the movement of thermal coal, crude oil and petroleum products along the coast over the years.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration.

(d) Does not arise.

SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Sir, I am not really satisfied with the answer, specially the answer given to part (b) of my question, wherein I asked about the effect on the coastal shipping industry. I asked the question, through I know the answer and the answer is that the coastal shipping industry has totally collapsed. There are only 14 passenger-cum-cargo ships operating in the country, mainly for Andamans and Lakshadweep. Even in the Annual Report, there is no policy statement as far as shipping is concerned....

MR. SPEAKER: You please put the question. You are not expected to give information. You can make use of that information to frame that question.

SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Sir, on the Goa-Bombay belt itself, there are many ports. The Coastal Shipping was operation well, when it was nationalised in 1983. And then, it was closed in 1985. We are not interested