

(b) The State-wise data regarding the quantum of loan provided by the nationalised banks to the rural artisans during 1994-95 is being collected and, to the extent available, will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### Closure of Tea Gardens in Darjeeling

4092. SHRIMATI GIRIJA DEVI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of tea gardens managed by the Government in Darjeeling have been closed down during each of the last two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government for reviving these tea gardens?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b) No official closure or lock out has been declared in any of the tea gardens in the Darjeeling District owned by Government agencies. However, Pashok, Vah Tukvar and Potong Tea Estates in Darjeeling District owned by Tea Trading Corporation of India Ltd. have been facing problems on account of continuing losses and mounting arrears of wages and salaries of the workers.

(c) In view of the consistent losses by the gardens owned by Tea Trading Corporation of India Ltd., it has been decided to dispose of all the gardens including Pashok, Potong and Vah Tukvar through outright sale.

#### Carpet Industry

4093. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the crisis being faced by the Carpet Industry at present;

(b) if so, the number of small and medium scale carpet units closed during the last two years;

(c) the loss of foreign exchange suffered by the Government as result of the closing down of said carpet units; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to eliminate child labour from carpet industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The crisis being faced by the carpet industry at present is due to exaggerated and motivated publicity within and outside the country regarding involvement of child labour and also the general economic recession prevalent in the world market, particularly in the U.S.A. and Germany, which are the principal importers of our carpets.

(b) The Government is not aware of any carpet unit closing down due to the above mentioned reasons.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to eliminate child labour from carpet industry include: stepping up of enforcement measures, welfare measure for rehabilitation of children weaned away from the carpet industry; promotional publicity measures and introduction of a label called "Kaleen" to be affixed on carpets to be exported, signifying commitment towards eradication of children from the carpet industry.

[English]

#### Non-Payment of Dues

4094. SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees of Refractory and Ceramic Units and other units of Burn Standard Company Limited, Calcutta are not getting the salary and wages in time;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Provident Fund money, gratuity and other admissible benefits to retired employees have not been paid in full in the said company for the last three years;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Payment of salaries and wages to the employees became irregular in all units of Burn Standard Company Ltd. (BSCL) including Refractory and Ceramic units mainly due to drastic reduction in the off take of railway wagons.

(c) and (d) Due to financial constraints the company could not pay statutory liabilities in full to the retired employees for the last three years. As on 30.11.1995 the outstanding statutory liabilities of the company is Rs.18.28 crores.

(e) Government has released Rs.5.30 crores to Burn Standard Company Ltd. during the current year for payment of salaries and wages to the employees. Performance of BSCL is improving with the recent release of wagon orders to the company.

#### Pending Cases of Central Excise

4095. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of cases relating to Central Excise lying pending in the Supreme Court/High Courts/Tribunals as on August 1, 1995;

(b) Since how long these cases have been lying pending, and the reasons for not disposing of these cases;