

(b) whether due to lack of any pr oper instruction the nationalised banks are opening branches only in the cities and not in the rural areas ;

(c) names of the nationalised banks and number of branches opened by them till now in the rural areas of each State ;

(d) why a portion of the total number of branches opened by a bank should not be made compulsory for opening in the rural areas ; and

(e) how Government propose to make available banking and credit facility through the nationalised banks in Assam and other parts of North East Region ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI H. M. PATEL) : (a) In keeping with the overall policy of the Government to secure accelerated rural development, the public sector banks have been advised to enlarge the flow of their credit in the rural areas. Towards this end, the banks have been asked, among other things, to strengthen their branch network in underbanked rural areas and to ensure that large geographical areas do not remain devoid of banking facilities.

(b) No, Sir. As per the latest information available, during the first quarter of the current year, the public sector banks opened 198 branches of which 119 were at rural centres and 17 at semi-urban centres.

(c) Statewise bankwise data in respect of rural branches of the public sector banks available for end-December 1977 are set out in the Statement laid on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2433/78]

(d) In order to devote greater attention to the needs of rural areas in underbanked districts/States, the Reserve Bank of India have indicated to the banks that during the current year the allotment of urban and metropolitan centres will be restricted.

(e) In accordance with the general policy, the banks are endeavouring to strengthen their branch network in Assam and other parts of the North-Eastern Region. Besides direct lending efforts are also being made to enlarge flow of bank credit to agriculture through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and Farmers' Service Societies. Banks are also endeavouring to bring about change in their operational requirements in keeping with the special circumstances obtaining in the North-Eastern

Region. Further to facilitate the flow of credit to the small borrowers in the neglected sectors, the financing institutions, including the banks, have taken up the implementation of the District Credit Plan formulated by the Lead Banks.

Shifting of Tobacco Board Headquarters Outside Guntur

815. SHRI RAM PRAKASH TRIPATHI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CO-OPERATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to shift the headquarters of the Tobacco Board to a place outside Guntur which is an important centre of virginia tobacco and where more than Rs. 50 crores worth of infrastructure has already been built; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI (ARIF BEG) : (a) and (b) . In the Tobacco Board (Amendment) Bill, 1978, passed by the Lok Sabha on 18th July, 1978, there is an enabling provision to empower the Central Government to locate the head office of the Tobacco Board at a place other than Guntur, but there is no proposal at present to shift the head office from Guntur.

ख़ास के आयात की प्रक्रिया

816. श्री नवाब सिंह जीहान : क्या वाणिज्य, नागरिक प्रति और सहकारिता मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार द्वारा ख़ास के आयात के लिए दी गई नई आयात सुविधाओं के क्रियान्वयन के लिए ऐसी कोई प्रक्रिया अपनाई गई है जिससे यह सुनिश्चित हो सके