

(d) if so, the concrete action taken by the Government to provide protection to domestic edible oil industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) No reduction in customs duty on edible oils has been made after the presentation of the budget for the year 1997-98.

(c) and (d) The present rates of customs duty applicable to edible oils have been prescribed taking into account all relevant factors, including the interests of the domestic industry, with a view to ensure the availability of edible oils to the consumer at reasonable prices.

[English]

NTC Losses

514. SHRI N. RAMAKRISHNA REDDY : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to abolish subsidiary offices of NTC to contain loss;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the justification therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA):

(a) There is at present no proposal to abolish any of the subsidiary corporations of the National Textile Corporation.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Posts Lying Vacant in Banks/LIC

515. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state.

(a) the state-wise number of posts reserved for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes are lying vacant in Banks and Life Insurance Corporation;

(b) the action being taken to fill up these posts during the current financial year; and

(c) the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Empowerment of Women

516. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased be state:

(a) whether in the light of the discussions during the debates in both the Houses of Parliament on the occasion of 50th Anniversary of Independence, the Government have taken or propose to take any effective steps for empowerment of women including provision of due

representation in legislative bodies as committed by various political parties.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress so far made in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (c) The Constitution (Eighty-first Amendment) Bill, 1996 which seeks to reserve one-third of the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of every State for women has already been introduced by the Government in the Lok Sabha on 12.9.96. The bill was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament and the Committee presented its report on 9.12.1996. Government has since accepted all the recommendations made by the Joint Committee.

Income Tax Arrears

517. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA :
DR. ARVIND SHARMA :
SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of Income Tax arrears outstanding upto June, 1997 alongwith year-wise break up for the last five years;

(b) the details of defaulters who owe arrears amounting to ten lakhs or more;

(c) whether these defaulters have been prosecuted;

(d) if so the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the efforts made to recover the arrears and the amount of arrears recovered so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The total outstanding demand of Corporation tax and income-tax for the last five years are as under:—

Fin. Years	Total Outstanding Demand (Rs. in crores)
1992-93	9211
1993-94	10780
1994-95	22699
1995-96	28970
1996-97 (Prov.)	33979
1997-98 (Upto June, 97)	33320

(b) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Import of Coins

518. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether employees of all Government mints have protested against the import of two and five rupee coins;

(b) if so, the silent points in their protest;

(c) the value of the coins to be imported and the country from which the Government have decided to import the coins; and

(d) the cost analysis of the imported coins and manufactured in the country by full utilisation of present machinery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) Keeping in view the acute shortage of coins and Government Mints' limited capacity, the Government has decided to import 300 million pieces of Rs. 2 coins from the Republic of Korea and 700 million pieces of Re. 1 coins from Mexico on the basis of a global tender. The total value of these coins would be Rs. 130 Crores. The Comparative cost of imported and indigenous coins is as under:—

	Rs. 2 per thousand pieces	Re. 1 per thousand pieces
Coins manufacture by Govt. of India Mints	Rs. 1690	Rs. 870
Imported coins	Rs. 1221	Rs. 541

Some employees Unions in the Mints have expressed apprehensions that their workload and consequently their wages could get reduced on account of imports. Their apprehensions are misplaced as Government is also modernising the Mints to meet the growing demand of coins.

[Translation]

Voluntary Disclosure Scheme

519. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH:
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the business community is in a dilemma with the 'Voluntary Income Disclosure Scheme' since if these happens to be any manipulation in the disclosure of their income, they fear the raids of the Income Tax Department very often and if they observe sincerity in disclosing their

income, they are struck with the fear of departments like excise and sales taxes;

(b) if of, whether the Government have taken any concrete steps to dispel the fear prevailing in the business community on this count; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) Any such apprehensions with regard to the Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme is not justified. The Scheme provides that the declarations shall be filed only before the Commissioners of Income-tax and strict confidentiality would be maintained in respect of the declarants. The secrecy and the immunity provisions of the Scheme have been widely publicised to dispel any fear lurking in the minds of the declarants.

[English]

Law for Indian Christians

520. SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to amend certain provisions of law regarding inheritance, marriage, divorce and adoption among Christians in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have held consultations with Christian Leaders and M.Ps in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (d) The Government has under consideration comprehensive proposal for bringing in changes in the Christian personal law regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption. It has made a reference to the National Commission for Minorities requesting the Commission to inform as to whether an ascertainable cross section of the Christian community is in favour of the proposal. The Government also sought the views/comments of the State Governments/U.T. Administrations on the proposal. It also proposes to hold consultations with the Christian Members of Parliaments as soon as possible and in this regard, copies of the proposal were made available to certain Members of Parliament.

Non-Banking Financial Companies

521. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTADAR :
SHRI ANANT GUDHE :
SHRI L. RAMANA :
SHRI Y.S. RAJASEKHAR REDDY :
SHRI JAYSINH CHAUHAN :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: