

and whether the Ministry would consider to provide relief to these units which have been threatened due to adverse market economy?

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : This is a state matter and we cannot take any action until those states reduce the power tariff.

[English]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : May I know from the hon. Minister whether any plan has been made by the Government to expand the infrastructure for gearing up the industrial development?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : No infrastructure have been framed for electric arc furnace . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Khan, you have only one supplementary. Please take your seat.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, many mini-steel plants of our country are facing crisis. This is not only because of the recession in the steel sector . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : No reply has been given to my question. Reply must be given to my question. . . . (Interruptions)

11.33 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Sunil Khan came and stood on the floor near the Table)

SHRI SUNIL KHAN : I want answer to my question . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This is not good.

(Interruptions)

11.34 hrs.

(At this stage, Shri Sunil Khan went back to his seat)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, many mini-steel plants of our country are facing crisis for the last three or four years. The recession which is already there in the steel sector is not the reason for the crisis in the mini-steel industries. There are a number of factors. Mini-steel

industries were contributing to the extent of 5.3 million tonne per annum.

Our total steel production is to the extent of only 20 million tonnes per annum and due to the closure of 143 mini steel plants, 34,000 workers have been rendered jobless and we are incurring losses. There are a number of reasons for closure of steel plants. One reason is due to the earth furnace which is an old, outdated technology. May I know from the Minister whether the Government of India will take steps to revive, restart and reopen all these closed mini steel plants where thousands of workers are engaged?

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia, please ask your supplementary.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, may I know from the Minister whether the Government will formulate any programme in order to revive, restart and reopen the closed mini steel plants?

[Translation]

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : Sir, presently 34000 employees have been rendered jobless due to the closure of private sector units. A few units are being closed in private sector whereas 6-7 industries are being installed there. There is no plan to give benefit to those employees who have been affected due to closure of these units of private sector, and the Government is not responsible. These employees are getting employment in the newly set up units.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Where these units have been opened and who is getting employment, whether the government is taking any initiative and who is establishing these industries? Please clarify the position in this regard? . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESH BAIS : Those industries, which have been closed due to old technique and mismanagement and reopened, are Indian Seamless, Essar, Jindal, Prakash etc. The employees are being absorbed in the newly set up industries.

[English]

FDI for Housing Sector

*167. **SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :**
SHRI K.P. MOHAN :

Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have permitted 100% foreign direct investment for housing sector in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of estimated investment in housing from the Government and Private Sector and from foreign direct investment during the current year and the Ninth Plan period; and

(d) the details of investment proposed for housing in rural sector?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI) : (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

FDI for Housing Sector

(a) and (b) At present, Foreign Direct Investment is not permitted in the housing sector.

(c) As per the report of the Working Group on Urban Housing for the Ninth Plan, the projected flow of funds from the formal sector for urban housing is Rs. 34,000 crores during the 9th Plan period. During 1998-99 the gross budgetary support for central sector housing and shelter schemes is to the extent of Rs. 491 crores in urban sector. Since FDI is not permitted now, the issue of estimating foreign direct investment during the year and the Ninth Plan does not arise.

(d) As ascertained from the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, during the Ninth Five Year Plan the budgetary outlay envisaged for the Centrally sponsored scheme of Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) for 1997-98 is Rs. 1143.75 crores and for 1998-99 the outlay is Rs. 1600 crores.

Sir, without the hon. Member having to ask the supplementary question, I would like to supplement this information and draw the attention of the hon. Member to a statement made by the hon. Prime Minister on the 28th of November, 1998 in which he said, *inter alia*, that the possibility of availing investments from abroad, including FDI in housing-related activities, is also an important thrust area for my Government and the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Employment has already come up with specific proposals which are under serious consideration by the Cabinet. We propose to provide highly liberal terms for FDI in the housing sector.

Sir, the policy will be formulated very soon. I will come back to the House with the policy. So, I would request all the Members to postpone asking any further questions about this matter a little later.

MR. SPEAKER : It is a good reply.

Shri Sharma, please keep in mind the fact that the Minister has already requested not to put any supplementary on this question.

[Translation]

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has mentioned one point. He is of the view that a policy is to be framed for the direct capital investment. In this connection Hon'ble Prime Minister has also stated and a proposal is being awaited from his ministry. The Hon'ble Minister has said that it would be better to consider this question after that is reached to them. Therefore, I think that this question may be put up later on at any time.

[English]

Disparity in Pay Scales of Armed Forces

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*168. SHRI U.V. KRISHNAMRAJU :
SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since examined the Ajit Kumar Committee report on anomalies and disparities in pay and allowances of the Armed Forces;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be implemented;

(c) if not, the reasons for delay;

(d) whether the Government have also constituted any anomalies committee within the Defence wings to remove genuine anomalies among the various cadres of the Armed Forces; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Ajit Kumar Committee constituted to consider the anomalies in Pay and Allowances of the Armed Forces personnel arising out of the implementation of the Vth Central Pay Commission recommendations submitted its Report to the Government on 23.4.1998. On the directions of the Prime Minister, a Group of Officers consisting of Cabinet Secretary as Chairman, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff and Chief of Air Staff, Defence Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary (DOP&T), Secretary (Expendi-