

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It has been reported by Central Fuel Research Institute that the prospect of production of hydrogen from coal by various routes as a distinct technology has been known for quite sometime. In this context CFRI has carried out exploratory studies on certain areas, namely *via* gasification and catalytic dehydrogenation upto various scales. However, no proposal is under consideration with the Government at present.

Prime Minister's Advisory Council

1508. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister's Advisory Council has pointed out that rigid norms have turned capital markets shallow; and

(b) if so, steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) The Subject Group on Capital Markets and Financial Sector Initiatives of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Trade and Industry has gone into various aspects relating to development and regulation of different segments of the capital market. Keeping the recommendations of the Group in view, appropriate measures are being taken from time to time to meet the requirements of the capital market.

Ban on Export of Cotton

1509. SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU :
SHRI K. PARYMOHAN :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tamil Nadu Government has requested the Union Government for ban on export of cotton;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken in this regard and the steps taken to meet the shortage of yarn in the State?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (c) Yes sir, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had written a letter to the Union Minister of Textiles requesting not to allow export of raw cotton because of the crisis being faced by the textile industry in Tamil Nadu. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu was informed that under the long term export policy of Government, export of raw cotton is allowed keeping in view the specific objectives of 'stabilisation of cotton prices', 'ensuring remunerative prices to the cotton growers' and 'maintaining India's presence in the international market as a stable supplier of cotton'. The Cotton Advisory Board has estimated total supply of cotton during the current cotton season 1998-99 to the extent of 198.00 lakh bales (including carry over stocks and estimated import of 6.50 lakh bales) as against the total demand to the extent of 158 lakh bales (including estimated export of 2 lakh bales) leaving thereby a comfortable closing stock of 40 lakh bales of raw cotton. Moreover, import of raw cotton is placed under Open General Licence with 5% duty to allow free import if so needed. In the present economic scenario there is no restriction, except locational, for setting up of spinning mills. Also, Government do not have any scheme to supply yarn to any particular State/ Industry except to the Handloom Sector.

Credit for Agriculture and Food Processing Sectors

1510. SHRI D.S. AHIRE :
SHRI ABHAYSINH S. BHONSLE :
SHRI M. RAJIAH :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a gap of credit ratio between Agriculture and food processing sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to bridge the gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS