

port of the pensioners. As a pensioner, I am very glad that he is taking interest in the welfare of the pensioners. May I point out to him that we do take into account the fact of longevity, etc. and there is a continuous revision of the commutation table, etc. As regards dearness allowance, pensioners do get certain increases in their pensions taking into account higher cost of living index. But having said that, when you refer to the fact that our aim is a Welfare state—certainly, it is our aim—we have to cut our cost according to the cloth available, that is, the resources of the country must always be kept in mind. Whatever welfare activity that the Government may undertake, it must also take into account the resources of the country. I think, this cannot be forgotten.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: The Minister is talking about resources. How much is the uncollected tax arrears at present?

***R. SPEAKER:** That is not to be answered

SHRI H. M. PATEL: I will not answer that.

Export Targets for Engineering Goods

*249. **SHRI CHITTA BASU:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Engineering Export Promotion Council have fixed the export targets for engineering goods for the Eastern Region at Rs. 120 crores and Rs. 140 crores for 1977-78 and 1978-79 respectively;

(b) if so, whether Government consider it necessary to improve the rate of capacity utilisation to fulfil the target; and

(c) if so, the steps Government have taken or propose to take for speedy improvement in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI ARIF BAIG): (a) The Eastern Regional Committee of the Engineering Export Promotion Council has fixed an export target of Rs. 50 crores for 1977-78 and Rs. 175 crores for 1978-79.

(b) Capacity availability is not a constraint in the way of fulfilment of the targets. But, better capacity utilisation will improve the viability of firms, and, hence, their capability for increased export efforts.

(c) Improved capacity utilisation depends on factors like availability of power, availability of raw materials, good labour relations, effective management operations, etc. The Ministries of Government concerned with these matters are continuously taking steps to bring about improvement.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I think the hon. Minister is quite a knowledgeable person in this respect also. May I know whether he is aware of the fact that the entire eastern region of our country accounted for 66 per cent of the total export of our engineering goods about a decade ago, namely, 1960 and it had dropped down to a figure of only 15 per cent in the year 1975-76? Whether he is also aware of the fact that during the last ten years, the export of engineering goods in the country increased by 14-fold whereas in the case of eastern region, it has increased only by three-fold. Having regard to all these things, I also want to give other facts about the total manufacturing units in West Bengal. As far as those units are concerned, there was a decline in export from 23.5 per cent to 16.9 per cent. So far as production capital is concerned, it was 30 per cent ten years ago. Now it has dropped down to 22.2 per cent. So far as employment potential is concerned, it was 33.2 per cent ten years ago. Now it has dropped down to 19.6 per cent. In view of all this, may I know from the hon. Minister, what concrete, particular and specific steps Government

has so far taken or proposed to take in the interest of the country as a whole? I also want to know what particular steps Government has taken or proposes to take in the matter of revitalising the engineering industry as a process of rejuvenating it which I may be permitted to say.

SHRI ARIF BEG: It is true that due to many problems in that area, production has come down. Government has taken many steps for the improvement of these conditions. Slackness in demands was being experienced by the engineering industry for about two years. In the past, this slackness in demand had been experienced by other industries as well. There is the example of the textile industry. The lower purchasing power in the hands of the people and the relatively lower production in the five years plan has been responsible for.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: The answer is not to the question.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): I do appreciate the concern of the hon. Member and I need not go into the political history of the last ten years why production has come down in West Bengal and in the eastern region. Mr. Chitta Basu knows the reasons much better than I do. (*Interruptions*) There are several problems. One problem is of input, power, communications and the other inputs required for the industrial growth. The second is the labour relationship. The third is the proper management in every sphere. There was a sudden setback. But as the export has increased within two years, it is obvious that gradually the industrial movement has started picking up and so also export. That is the reason why, as has been stated in the original reply, as against the export of Rs. 66 crores last year, this year, it is planned to have an export to the tune of

Rs. 150 crores. For the next year it is Rs. 175 crores. This very fact that additional exports are envisaged reflects that it is because of certain steps taken by the Government that the production has started yielding results. And it shall be the endeavour of the Government to see that this eastern sector does not suffer any longer.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: There are small engineering industries particularly in Howrah and other places. What particular steps Government propose to take for the rejuvenation of those small engineering industries?

SHRI MOHAN DHARIA: Here also it is the policy of the new Government to give all possible protection to the small scale units. My colleague, Shri George Fernandes, has stated on the floor of the House the various steps being taken by the Government to give all possible protection to small units. If I may quote, the number of exporters which was 177 has gone up to 290, and by and large most of them are in the small scale sector.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Special Monetary Grant to States

*244. **SHRI MOHD. HAYAT ALI:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some State Governments have approached the Central Government for a special monetary grant;

(b) if so, the names of the States and the amount demanded;

(c) whether the West Bengal Government have also requested for the same grant in order to solve some outstanding problems of the West Bengal; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?