

**Proposal to Enter into Agreement with Soviet Union for Import of High Quality Coking Coal**

7189. DR. G. S. RAJHANS : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal under the consideration of Government to enter into a long term agreement with the Soviet Union for import of high quality coking coal for its steel plants ;

(b) if so, whether any discussion with the Soviet Government has been held recently in this connection ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and when a final agreement is likely to be reached ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) (a) to (c). At the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission meeting held in Moscow from 26th to 29th April, 1985, a request was made to USSR to consider the possibilities of exporting coking coal to India. The Soviet side agreed to consider this possibility from a period beyond 1990.

**Raising of Funds for Agriculture by Commercial Banks**

7190. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Will the Minister of FINANCE : be pleased to state :

(a) Whether the Reserve Bank of India has instructed the commercial banks to raise the percentage of their funds allotted to agriculture for the year 1985-86 ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India has advised the commercial banks to raise the percentage of their direct finance to agriculture (including allied activities) to at least 16% of the total bank credit by the end of March, 1987.

**Proposal to Entrust Canalisation of Steel Imports to MMTC**

7191. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to news reports in the 'Economic Times' of April 25, 1985 stating that entrusting canalisation of steel imports to the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation instead of the Steel Authority of India Limited will adversely affect consumer interests ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

(c) whether SAIL is equipped to handle steel imports better than MMTC ; and

(d) the role of controller of iron and steel in deciding quantity of steel import and its distribution in case MMTC makes the imports ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : (a) to (c). Yes Sir. The change of canalising agency has been brought about on the principle that a manufacturer should not also be the canalising agency. It is expected that consumer interests will not be adversely affected on account of this change.

(d) The Iron and Steel Controller will continue to play an important role in the processing of import clearances. Imported steel is not distributed by him.

**UK's Offer to Get the Global Trade Negotiations Reopened**

7192. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the British Overseas Development Minister met him recently at New Delhi ;

(b) whether U.K. offered its intervention to get the global trade negotiations reopened ; and