

(c) It is planned to phase out steam traction by 2000 A.D. Both Diesel and Electric locomotives will be in use on Indian Railways.

[*English*]

**Kerala Suggestion on Product Development Fund**

278. SHRI T. BASHEER: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala Government have suggested for the creation of a product development fund for the State for development of export-oriented projects in a memorandum submitted to Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI): (a) and (b). A suggestion was made by the Kerala Government that a Product Development Fund should be set up by Government and the State Governments should be credited with 15 per cent of the total export earnings, which would be utilized for specific projects.

(c) The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

**Indo-USSR Steering Committee Meet**

279. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the meeting of the Indo-Soviet steering committee to promote collaboration between business organisations was held on September 27, 1988;

(b) if so, the details of the same; and

(c) India's trade turnover with USSR in the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI): (a) and (b). A meeting of the business organisations of both the countries, under the joint sponsorship of the Steering Group of the Ministry of Commerce and the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was held in new Delhi from 26th to 27th September, 1988. These were followed by discussions with FICCI, ASSOCHAM and Indo-USSR Chamber of Commerce on the subsequent dates. The Indian Delegation was led by Commerce Secretary and the Soviet delegation was led by the Vice-President of the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The discussions covered a wide range of subjects like diversification and promotion of bilateral trade promotion of new forms of cooperation like production cooperation, joint ventures in both the countries, cooperation in services sector, etc.

(c) The Indo-Soviet Trade Plan for 1988 envisages a trade turnover of the order Rs. 5,000 crores. The present indications are that the trade plan target is likely to be exceeded.

**Tax Dues from Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd.**

280. SHRI NATVARSIKH SOLANKI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given on 5 August, 1988 to Unstarred Question No. 1582 regarding tax dues from Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Private Limited and state:

(a) whether the balance demand of Rs. 26,82,164 has since been collected; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor and action proposed to be taken to recover the amount?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI A.K. PANJA): (a) No, Sir.