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Import of Newsprint from U.S.S.R.

7863. SHRI BISHWANATH JHUN-JHUNWALA : Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have reached an agreement with the Soviet Union for the supply of newsprint to our country;

(b) if so, the total quantity of newsprint that has been contracted for import and the rate thereof; and

(c) the extent to which the need for newsprint will be met by this import ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE) : (a) The Indo-USSR Trade Plan for the year 1972 signed in Moscow on the 5th May, 1972 between the Government of India and the Government of USSR provides for supply of newsprint by USSR to India. A delegation from the USSR is currently in India to negotiate and to finalise the contract with the State Trading Corporation of India.

(b) and (c). Do not arise as the negotiations are still in progress.

Suspension of Employees of Traffic and Commercial Departments (Northern Railway)

7864. SHRI ISHWAR CHAUDHRY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of staff belonging to Traffic and Commercial Departments of Northern Railway, Division-wise, who were placed under suspension during the last three years;

(b) the number of staff against whom disciplinary action for major penalty was

initiated but who were not placed under suspension; and

(c) the number of cases which have since been finalised and in which punishments have been imposed ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA) : (a) to (c). Information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Sabha.

Export Earnings of Handicrafts

7865. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI : Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) the Fourth Plan export target of Handicrafts and the actual export earnings in 1971-72;

(b) the number of Sales-cum-Study teams which went abroad during 1970-71 and 1971-72 to explore the possibility of increasing handicrafts exports and the results thereof; and

(c) the nature of assistance and incentives given by Government for the development of this industry ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (SHRI A. C. GEORGE) : (a) The Fourth Five Year Plan export target of handicrafts was fixed at Rs. 100 crores. Exports during 1970-71 were of the order of Rs. 82.30 crores. During 1971-72 actuals upto November, 1971 were Rs. 59.30 crores and the exports estimated for the full year are Rs. 85.00 crores.

(b) Five Sales-cum-Study teams went abroad during 1970-71. A Market Orientation Tour of handicrafts exporters was arranged during 1971-72. These teams contacted importers, stockists, designing institutions & exports, etc. in the places visited by them. The teams also carried samples along with them, arranged their displays and booked sizeable orders. They also opened new avenues for Indian handicrafts.

(c) Assistance to the handicrafts industry is given in various forms. Important among