

Reduction of sales is due to economic recession.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

WATER METERS PURCHASED BY HEAVY ENGINEERING CORPORATION

1729. SHRI PREM CHAND VERMA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Heavy Engineering Corporation, Limited purchased 6,000 water meters valued at Rs. 6 lakhs in 1964, which were not made use of till 31st December, 1966;

(b) whether these meters were not used because they were defective; and

(c) the details of the loss suffered and the action taken against those responsible for the loss?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI F. A. AHMED):

(a) For the quarters in the township, Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited purchased 6,912 water meters valued at Rs. 6.02 lakhs during the period from February 1963 to January, 1965.

(b) and (c). 2,129 meters were installed at a cost of Rs. 1.09 lakhs during the period from April 1963 to June 1965. As a result of agitation among the low paid employees and consequent conciliation proceedings, it was decided to reduce substantially the rate of water charges in respect of employees drawing pay upto Rs. 500/- per month and to allow certain free limits upto which no water charges were recoverable in respect of various categories of quarters. On account of the decision to reduce the rate, the installation of water meters became an uneconomic proposition and it was decided that water charges should be recovered at a flat rate only from the occupants of superior type of quarters and that no charges were to be levied in other cases. The recording of water reading therefore became unnecessary. All these could not be foreseen at the time the decision was taken to purchase the meters. Of the meters purchased 4,541 meters are still in stores in new condition and efforts are being made to sell them. There is no question of action against any officer of the Company.

COTTAGE INDUSTRY IN ORISSA

1730. SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scope for further development of cottage industries in Orissa;

(b) if so, the extent thereof; and

(c) the extent to which Government have contributed to encourage cottage industries in Orissa?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) to (c). The information will be collected and laid on the table of the House in due course.

PERFORMANCE OF RAILWAYS IN HANDLING GOODS TRAFFIC

1731. DR. RANEN SEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the performance of the railways in regard to goods traffic in the first four months of the current financial year was much below expectation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the performance of railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): (a) Yes. The loading of revenue earning goods traffic during the first 4 months of the current financial year was less than the anticipations.

(b) This was mainly due to less offering of traffic of all commodities, particularly traffic to and from Steel Plants, due to the recession and drought conditions.

(c) The reasons were beyond the control of Railways. Marketing and Sales Organisations have been set up on the railways to maintain close liaison with the rail users both with a view to develop new traffic as also to provide better service to our patrons.

INCREASE IN PRICE OF COAL

1732. DR. RANEN SEN :
SHRIMATI SAVITRI SHYAM :
SHRI MARANDI :
SHRI S. S. KOTHARI :

Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of coal of all grades have been increased by the Mine-owners since the 1st September, 1967; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL, MINES AND METALS (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. With a view to largely neutralising the effect of the implementation of the Coal Wage Board's recommendations, by mutual negotiations it was agreed that the price of coal be raised by Rs. 5/-, Rs. 4/- and Rs. 5.23 per tonne for coals from Bengal-Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh respectively, with effect from the 1st September, 1967.

CIRCULAR RAILWAY IN CALCUTTA

1733. **DR. RANEN SEN :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the result of investigation made by study team on the feasibility of having a circular Railway in Calcutta area has been submitted to Government; and

(b) if so, the main features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

EXTENSION OF B. G. RAILWAY LINE FROM JOGIGHOPA TO TINSUKIA

1734. **SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a memorandum from the C.P.I. Assam State Council was received by him in Gauhati on the 21st October, 1967 for the extension of the Broad Gauge Railway line from Jogighopa to Tinsukia for constructing a bridge over the Brahmaputra river; and

(b) if so, the decision taken by Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) Yes.

(b) Due to the difficult ways and means position, such a project is not being contemplated at present.

CONVERSION OF GUNTAKAL-BANGALORE M.G. LINE INTO B.G. LINE

1735. **SHRI S. A. AGADI :** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 1903 on the 18th November, 1966 and state :

(a) whether the traffic survey for the conversion of the Guntakal-Bangalore M.G. section to B.G. has been completed; and

(b) if so, the estimated cost thereof and when the work is likely to be started ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) Not yet.

(b) Does not arise.

KANDLA AND KARAIKAL PORTS

1736. **SHRI S. A. AGADI :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to declare Kandla and Karaikal (South) as 'free ports';

(b) if so, whether any areas have been earmarked around the respective ports; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) No, Sir. There is no proposal to declare Kandla or Karaikal as 'free ports'.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

CLOSURE OF INDUSTRIES IN MYSORE

1737. **SHRI S. A. AGADI :** Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Mysore State Government have decided to close some industries out of the state managed group of industries;

(b) if so, whether the Union Government have considered to take over some essential industries that are inefficiently managed by the Mysore State Government; and

(c) if so, the industries which are proposed to be closed ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI F. A. AHMED) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.