

(b) the steps being taken to liquidate the stocks and to prevent unemployment among the weavers?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Commerce (Shri Shafi Qureshi): (a) and (b). Government had received reports about considerable accumulation of handloom stocks in the country. As a special measure to clear the accumulation, State Governments have been authorised to grant a special additional rebate of five paise in the rupee on all retail sales of handloom cloth for a period of one month at their discretion; this is in addition to the fifteen days' special additional rebate normally allowed every year. Reports just received indicate that after the special rebate has been in operation for the past seventeen days, handloom stocks in Madras State are normal.

Drivers and Firemen in Chakradharpur Railway Division

2480. Shri H. C. Soy:
Shri Besra:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the surplus Drivers and Firemen in Chakradharpur Division of the South Eastern Railway specially in Dangoaposi Section have been reverted to Class IV jobs and are being put to sudden changes of duty even there;

(b) if so, whether the Railways have worked out any plan so that the staff rendered surplus on this account is absorbed without loss of pay and seniority in service; and

(c) if so, the details of such a plan?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the Sabha.

Freight on Soft Coal

2481. Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri P. C. Barman:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan under consideration for reducing freight on soft coke and kerosene with a view to giving relief to domestic consumers, majority of whom belong to lower middle class; and

(b) if so, the main features thereof?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Idle Capacity in Private Collieries

2482. Shri Rameshwar Tantia:
Shri P. C. Barman:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Mines and Metals be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the private collieries are working much below their capacity; and

(b) if so, the extent of their idle capacity and the steps being taken to utilise the same?

The Minister of Mines and Metals (Shri S. K. Dey): (a) and (b). It has not been possible to make a precise assessment of idle capacity in private sector collieries.

Chemical and Metallurgical Non-Gazetted Staff

2483. Shri Shinkre:
Shri Madhu Limaye:
Shri Manoharan:
Shri Rajaram:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chemical and Metallurgical non-