

hon. Minister review the import liberalisation policy and will see that this decline in our foreign exchange reserves is checked?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Sir, so far as imports and exports are concerned, as I have stated many times on the floor of the House, they are not exclusively in the hands of our Ministry. We simply act as a catalyst agent providing import licences as per the requirements of various Ministries, various public sector undertakings and others. Insofar as liberalisation is concerned, it was every conscious decision with a view to modernise our technology to increase the output and productivity. But the only concept is that to match the whole situation, we require much more aggressive and vigorous marketing efforts so far as exports are concerned. We are actively doing it and we are still hopeful that the export turn-over will not disappoint the country.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY : Sir, is the Government vigorously following and implementing the policy of establishing more free trade zones where the single window clearance system is implemented? If so, is the Government clearing Vizag as on the free trade zones? this matter has been pending with the Government of India for a long time. So, is the Government clearing Vizag and establishing free trade zone there?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Sir, I seek your protection, This question is not related to free trade zone.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Minister whether he is aware of the tendency to obtain clearance in regard to import in the name of export in the first place, then fail to export in adequate quantity and get the original conditionality of export relaxed at a later stage. Therefore, this phenomenon is growing and the Government has also not only been liberal in regard to import policies but it has also been liberal in regard to relaxation of this link. So, will the Minister clarify and answer?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Sir, the existing practice is to make imports in exchange of export obligation. The guidelines are given which are strictly monitored to see whether the objections have been fulfilled or not. If there is any violation referred to us, we can take action. If the hon. Member sends us the specific cases, we will look into them.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Did the Government relax it? That is what I asked.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Never.

Soviet Assistance for Railway Projects

*44. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA:
SHRIMATI D.K. BHANDARI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether an agreement has been signed with the Soviet Union for electrification of country's railway system and development of other sectors of Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government also propose to take assistance from the Soviet Union to provide rail link to areas of the country not connected with rail; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Sir, for question No. 44 with your permission, I would like to make a slight amendment to the answer because the focus was on electrification, that is why we said 'No, Sir'. But there are other areas which she has

asked about. Sir, with your permission, I would like to amend the answer. I would like to convert 'No, Sir' the into 'Yes, Sir'. And also, Sir, in part (1), she has asked about the sectors. The protocol signed with the Soviet Union covers the following areas:

- (1) the supplies of equipment by the USSR to India;
- (2) Consultancy,
- (3) Collaboration in R & D
- (4) Cooperation and Consultancy services and construction projects;
- (5) Cooperation in metropolitan Railway projects in India.
- (6) Training for Indian Railway technical personnel in the USSR;
- (7) Cooperation in sports activities; and
- (8) Export of wagon components from India to the USSR.

The answer for part (c) is "No, Sir," for (d) "Does not arise".

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Sir, they have not said anything in their reply. They have given the negative replies. But not they have changed the replies. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government has accepted the Soviet Union's offer to construct metres in Delhi. If so, when will this work be started and whether it will also involve transfer of technology?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, the protocol signed with the Soviet Union a few days ago identifies possible areas of interest where cooperation may be initiated. As far as metre railway is concerned, as the House well know, it is an area which comes under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Ministry of Urban Development. Therefore

whilst we did show interest in this, I would like to read out the wordings. The Indian side showed interest and cooperation in the field of construction and operation of metropolitan projects in India. The Soviet side agreed to assist in initiating cooperation in the construction of metro systems in india on a turn-key basis with a suitable financial package including financing of local cost. The Soviet side will inform the appropriate authorities and Ministries so that they could take up final decision. In Soviet Union too, apart from the Railway Ministry, another Ministry deals with this subject. Therefore, they are also going to inform the appropriate authorities. They have reacted positively to our interest and we in our turn here will be informing the Urban Development Ministry, after which further efforts for concretisation, if decided feasible, will taken place.

SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in the Indo-Soviet protocol signed on 19th October last, the Soviet Union has offered to supply 10th Soviet high power locomotives. If so, I would like to know whether the government has accepted its offer or not.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, here again, we have shown interest in one-time import of 20 number of 25 KV AC thyristor locos which should be built according to our specification. The Soviet side is going to examine the feasibility of producing these 20 numbers of thyristor locomotives in the Soviet Union in accordance with our specification and will respond to us on this issue by February 1989. That is what they said.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Just now while giving replies regarding metres, he has stated that it requires sanction and cooperation of another Department, that is the Department of Urban Development. May I know from you whether the metro railways in Calcutta will be kept under the control of the Ministry of Railways or it will be handed over to the Urban Development Department for running the metro railways in Calcutta.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, at present the Calcutta Metro is being operated by the Indian Railways. However, various aspects of whether in future this should be under the independent authority, whether a separate Metropolitan Transport Authority should be set up, who should actually run the Metro and operate the Metro and possibly in the future even finance the Metro—this is an area which is being examined in all its details.

[*Translation*]

SHRI AMAR SINH RATHAWA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has paid a lot of attention to the electrification of railway tracks and took much interest in it. That is why we have made a lot of progress in this direction. There are large number of narrow gauge lines in our tribal areas. In this connection I would like to know from him if there are any plans to electrify the narrow gauge lines in the tribal areas.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Certain norms have been laid down for undertaking the work of electrification. Those sections and tracks, where large quantity of goods are loaded, are taken up first. If the quantity of goods loading is quite large in some tribal area, it could be considered for this purpose.

[*English*]

Increase In Import Duty on Pulses and Other Items

*45. SHRI V. TULSIRAM†:
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHER-
JEE :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have increased import duty on pulses and other items recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which such an increase in duty will adversely affect the common consumers and local markets; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to maintain the regular supply of such items at reasonable rates without being affected by the increase in duty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI A.K.PANJA) : (a) to (d). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

(a) to (d). With effect from the 3rd October, 1983, the rate of import duty on pulses has been increased from 10% to 35% advalorem. This increase has been made keeping in view the good crop prospects in the current year. The import of pulses constitutes a small percentage of the total supply and the prices are largely governed by demand and indigenous supply. Pulses are under O.G.L. and the trade is free to import as well as sell pulses without any restriction.

The rates of basic duty of customs of different types of raisins have also been increased with effect from the 3rd October, 1988 by about 50% of the rates which existed prior to that date.

[*Translation*]

SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will like to know from the hon. Minister the names of the countries from which these pulses have been imported and the quantities of each of these pulses imported during the last three years. The duty has been increased from 10 per cent to 35 percent. What has been the consequential amount of profit accrued to the Government and its effect on the market and also the result and change in the purchasing power of the common man?