

(d) The practice of carrying social burdens is not peculiar to Indian Railways alone. It is indeed a built-in feature of railway systems the world over. In most of the countries, the railways are being compensated for the losses they incur in consequence of their public service obligations, such as operation of uneconomic services, complying with price restraint orders and carrying certain traffic at concessional rates, etc. The practice in this regard varies from country to country but the reliefs are mainly in the following forms; (a) outright grants to cover the deficit; (b) soft loans to meet the accumulated burdens; and (c) the facility of writing off or writing down accumulated debts and unproductive capital.

Arms Supply to Rebels in N. E. Region

*378. SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item in the Hindustan Times of the 11th June, 1980 that foreign arms are being imported through Chittagong Port for being supplied to rebels in North Eastern Region of India; and

(b) whether the Government of Bangladesh have been asked to desist from helping the armed revolutionaries of this region and if so, their reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. However, these reports have not been confirmed and the Bangladesh Government have also denied them.

Pending Refund Cases

*379. KUMARI KAMLA KUMARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that thousands of refund cases for

1st class are pending in the office of Chief Commercial Superintendent, Northern Railway and the officials do not bother to clear the cases;

(b) if so, the number of pending cases; and

(c) the steps to be taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF):

(a) and (b). No separate statistics of refund cases for 1st class passengers are maintained. However, as on 30-6-1980, 7,990 old refund cases were pending disposal as a result of sharp increase in the intake of claims consequent upon the transfer of work relating to Delhi-Tughlakabad section of Northern Railway from 1-4-1979.

(c) (i) The general procedure for verification and processing of refund claims has been simplified and relaxed to cope with the arrears.

(ii) Additional posts of Refund Clerks have been sanctioned by Northern Railway Administration to clear the arrears of refund cases.

(iii) The existing staff have been persuaded to undertake extra work beyond the normal duty hours by assuring cash incentive.

Israel's Consulate in Bombay

*380. SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Heads of Missions of the Islamic Conference States in New Delhi have on or after 12th November, 1979 requested the Government of India to order closure of the Israel's consulate in Bombay; and

(b) whether Government have sought or propose to seek the closure of the said consulate?