

(b) the specific additional items and markets in which they have been successful; and

(c) the special efforts made to stabilise and/or introduce Indian goods in markets of developing countries?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c):

STATE TRADING CORPORATION (STC).

During the current financial year, the exports of STC are likely to be of the order of about Rs. 740 crores which would be about 30 per cent more than the exports made during 1974-75. During the current year, there has been an increase in the exports of commodities like sugar, cement, army software, etc., as compared to the last year. New items handled by STC include silver, linseed oil, sesame seeds and sodium sulphate. Exports in respect of certain commodities have been made to new destinations like Iraq, G.D.R., France, Finland, Hongkong and Malaysia. In order to take maximum advantage of the growing buying potential of the West Asian region, special efforts were successfully directed to increase exports to this region. Exports to U.S.A. and West Europe also increased substantially. During the current year, STC's exports to developing countries are estimated in the region of Rs. 420 crores as against Rs. 337 crores during 1974-75.

MINERALS AND METALS TRADING CORPORATION (MMTC).

During the current financial year, the export of MMTC are estimated to be of the order of about Rs. 165 crores which would be about 20 per cent more than exports during 1974-75. During this year, new ground has been broken by MMTC also. A ten-year long-term agreement for supply of 3 million tonnes of super high grade iron ore has been concluded with South Korea. A contract for supply of 50,000 tonnes of iron to Yugoslavia has also been concluded. Apart from supply of iron ore to steel

industry, MMTC has also seized opportunities for exporting iron ore to other countries where it is used for mixing purposes, e.g., the cement industry. A shipment of 11,000 tonnes of iron ore fines was made to Iraq on cost and freight basis for this purpose, MMTC scored several successes in the matter of sale prices of iron ore to destinations in East Europe and West Europe. As regards manganese ore, apart from consolidating its position in the markets of Taiwan and South Korea, MMTC has broken new ground in the Greek market and recaptured markets in Spain and South Korea. As regards coal, MMTC is planning to enter markets in West Europe, Japan, Egypt, Hongkong, Taiwan and Singapore, with a view to diversifying and broad-basing exports. At the same time, the Corporation is sustaining its export of coal to the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Setting up of Regional Rural Banks in Hilly and Backward States

*279. PROF NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state whether any priority is proposed to be given to hilly and backward States in opening of Regional Rural Banks in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN-CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE): In establishing Regional Rural Banks in the country, priority will be given to those areas which, while having good potential for agricultural development, are cooperatively backward and are inadequately served by commercial banks.

Direct Air Services to State Capitals

*280. SHRI K. PRADHANI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any programme to have direct air services to all State capitals; and