

for Technical Co-operation held in Nassau, The Bahamas, on 20th September, 1971, decided to expand the scope of the activities of the Commonwealth Fund to include technical assistance and market research aspects of export market development of developing Commonwealth countries. The decision in question followed the recommendations made in the Study prepared under the aegis of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

In accordance with the decision in question assistance would be available from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation to developing Commonwealth countries wishing to obtain technical assistance for export market development and to carry out market research in respect of their export products. Assistance may also be obtained by the developing commonwealth countries for conducting market surveys and market research including those in the field of 'invisible trade', like tourism.

(c) The Government of India had agreed to make an annual contribution equivalent to £15,000 in non-convertible rupees to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, but as its activities have been expanded, the possibilities for increasing the contribution are under consideration. As a developing Commonwealth country, India is eligible for obtaining technical assistance and assistance in carrying out market research from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. The extent to which India may benefit from the expansion of the scope of the activities of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation is not, however, precisely known at present.

Late Running of Trains in Sealdah Division (Eastern Railway)

*47. SHRI JAGADISH BHATTACHARYYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware of the late running of trains in the Sealdah Division (Eastern Railway);

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken for timely running of trains in that division and for mitigating the overcrowding of passengers in the Sealdah Division, particularly in the local trains ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. HANUMANTHAIYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) (i) Theft of overhead wires resulting in rakes getting locked up away from starting stations;
- (ii) Theft of equipment of rolling stock resulting in temporary immobilisation of the suburban electric rakes;
- (iii) Hold-up of trains resulting in rakes getting locked up away from starting stations; and
- (iv) Civil disturbances, Bundhs and imposition of curfew rendering train running and attendance of staff difficult and risky.

(c) Within the afore-mentioned limitations, everything feasible is being done to improve the punctuality performance of suburban trains in Sealdah Division. With a view to provide satisfactory transport to the commuters, the number of suburban trains in Sealdah Division have been progressively increased and their loads augmented.

Kerala Rubber Dealers' Protest against Government's Policy

*48. SHRI M. M. JOSEPH : Will the Minister of FOREIGN TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the rubber dealers in Kerala observed *hartal* on the 11th October, 1971 in protest against the alleged Government's policy leading to a crisis in rubber market and causing unemployment;

(b) whether any demand for direct purchase of rubber by State Trading Corporation was also made; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto ?