

unauthorised transactions of foreign exchange, because there is a wide gap between the official and non-official rates of diamonds? As a result of that these people are taking undue advantage of it, while the Government have been incurring loss of foreign exchange. What steps are proposed to be taken by the Government to check these illegal practices? Whether the Government is seized of these activities and whether in view of the above, the hon. Minister would direct the Indian consulates in foreign countries to keep appropriate vigilance or check in this regard so that the traders are kept under watch and the Government does not incur any loss on account of bungling in foreign exchange?

**SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI:** So far as the matter of bungling in the foreign exchange is concerned, it is the matter directly concerned with the Ministry of Finance. If the hon. Member has some particular complaint with him regarding such bungling, only then his Ministry should be asked to take an appropriate action in this regard. So far as the export of diamonds and gems is concerned, the traders in our country have been doing good and satisfactory work. It is through them that we have succeeded to expand the export constantly and it has added considerably to the foreign exchange earnings of our country. It is due to this fact that gems and diamond export have become the leading sector as compared to all other items being exported by India and that is why the Government intend to give more incentives to the people engaged in this trade so that they may increase their export and thus assist the Government to earn foreign exchange. As the demand of Indian gems and jewellery in the international market has registered the optimum increase. We want that the Government should provide incentives on all such items of export which may bring in foreign exchange. If the hon. Member has got some complaint against some individual trader, then the Ministry of finance can be asked to take action against that trader.

[English]

### Contractors for Cleaning of Platform Tracks

\*367. **SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the work of cleaning and sweeping of platform tracks and railway premises at some of the stations on Western Railway has been entrusted to contractors, rendering a number of regular employees jobless;

(b) if so, the names of stations on Western Railway where the work has been entrusted to contractors, and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of employees rendered jobless and the steps taken to provide alternate jobs to them?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):** (a) to (c). The work of cleaning has been awarded to contractors at Kota, Hindaun City, Shri Mahabirji, Gangapur City, Bhawani Mandi, Ramganj Mandi, Indergarh, Lakheri, Bayana, Fatehpur Sikri and Surat Stations on the Western Railway for better working. But this has not rendered any regular employee jobless.

[Translation]

**SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in his reply to my question the hon. Minister has stated that the work of cleaning has been awarded to contractors at 11 stations including kota on the Western Railway for better working. But this has not rendered any regular employee jobless. I would like to know the total number of workers presently engaged for the work of cleaning under the contractors and the number of persons employed for this work earlier. Does the Government propose to take measures to absorb all those persons who have been

rendered jobless at some other places.

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:** The contracts have been given at a very small scale on the Western Railway and that also only at those places where the Government considered it useless to engage full time workers because it was not justified on the basis of the existing work load. At certain places the work load increased quite rapidly and permanent employees were not available to handle that work load. Only in respect of such places, some contractors have been given petty contracts. As I have already submitted, this has not rendered any regular employee jobless, rather at certain places they had taken to the re-deployment of workers. But no body has been rendered jobless on that account.

**SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL:** I would like to know whether the hon. Minister propose to award the work of cleaning at other stations also to the contractors for better working.

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:** There are 7000 railway stations in the entire country, out of which the work of cleaning at only 11 stations on the Western Railway has been awarded to contractors. Similar decision can be taken even in future if the situation so demands and permanent employees are not available for the job in adequate number.

**SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you know, on one side the Hon. Prime Minister proposes to provide employment to crores of people under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, while on the other hand the railway department is rendering the regular employees jobless and intends to get the entire work done through the contractors. So I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Railway department would follow the footsteps of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and cancel and contracts so as to provide employment to more and more people at these 11 stations?

**SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:** As I

have already submitted, wherever the work has been awarded to the contractors, it is not on a large scale but on a very small scale. The reason for taking this decision was that when the work of cleaning on these stations was not found to be satisfactory, the Government considered it useless to increase the number of workers and the work was awarded on the contract basis. I have already stated that the contracts have been awarded only on a very small scale as we have not taken the policy decision of awarding the work on contract basis on a large scale.

[English]

### Appointment of SC/ST Judges in High Courts

\*368. **SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ:** Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether sometime back Government had advised the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of various High Courts to consider the names of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes for the appointment of High Court Judges; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by various High Court so far with regard to the appointment of Judges belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes?

**THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been appointed in some High Courts.

**SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ:** The reply to part (b) of the question seems to be not only evasive but discouraging too. I would like to know through you Sir whether the Minister of Law and Justice enlighten the House about the number of pending cases in the High Courts of the country Statewise as well as the number of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe judges in the country Statewise.