

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER : One of the textile mills run by the NTC in Bangalore city i.e. Mysore Mills and Minerva Mills, has informed the workers that one of the mills is to be closed. In that case 3000 to 4000 workers will be on the street. In reply to my letter, the hon. Minister has stated that the matter is still under consideration. What is the truth? In case you have decided to close one of the mills, what are you going to do with the workers? Are you going to absorb them or rehabilitate them?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : We have taken no decision to close any mill. The Mysore Spinning and Weaving Mill about which the hon. Member is referring, was established in 1884, in the last century and still we are trying to maintain it and run it in a proper way and with almost the same machinery I am told. I can assure you the hon. Member that in spite of the shortcomings we will see that the mill runs.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAMASHRAY PRASAD SINGH : Sir, one N.T.C. Mill at Gaya in Bihar is suffering losses on account of mismanagement. In this connection, the labourers of the Mill have presented a memorandum that the Mill is incurring losses due to mismanagement. Will he set the management right? In case this Mill is closed down due to losses, will you do something for 500 to 600 workers, whose life will be in peril?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have first submitted that we are continuously deliberating upon how to improve the management and I agree that we still have a lot to do in this regard. Along with it, we also want the cooperation of the working class in the entire process. I have submitted that we are making efforts to streamline the administrative structure and also to bring about improvement in the working of the mills.

[*English*]

Trade with Australia

*617. **SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a great scope for expansion of trade with Australia ;

(b) if so, the areas identified for the purpose ; and

(c) the recent joint efforts made to boost bilateral trade ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI) : (a) to (c) A statement is given below.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Areas identified for trade with Australia include export of engineering items such as boilers, electric motors, material handling equipments, earthmoving and transport equipments, pumps and compressors, transformers, insulators, steel pipes and tubes, business machines, computer, software chemicals including agro-chemicals, heavy duty tyres, handlooms, handicrafts and leather products and import of non-ferrous metals, coking coal, wool, fishing trawlers, merino rams and diamonds.

(c) The recent joint efforts to increase bilateral trade include establishment of a Indo-Australian Joint Business Council to facilitate interaction among business communities, participation in trade fairs, exchange of delegations and identification of items and areas for trade expansion during the 10th India Australia Joint Trade Committee meeting held in New Delhi in November, 1986.

SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO : The hon. Minister has identified so many items for export from India to Australia, but he has not clearly stated as to what is the quantum of export in rupee value from the date of agreement till today. Likewise, what is the quantum of import from Australia to India till today? May I know from the hon. Minister the correct picture?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : The figures for import and export I would like to spell out in brief least for the last three years so that the hon. Member may understand the position. 1984-85 Export (value in crores) Rs. 148.50 Import—Rs. 192.41.

In 1985-86, exports were Rs. 124.49 crores and imports were Rs. 420.79 crores. In 1986-87, up to December exports were Rs. 110.93 crores and imports were Rs. 311.44 crores. That is the precise position. As regards the quantum of each specific item, it will take much time. I will definitely supply the detailed information to the hon. Member.

SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO : Sir, I would like to know whether it is a fact that the Australian Government is willing to import locomotive ancillaries and heavy earth movers from our country. May I know from the hon. Minister what action have they taken to export these locomotive ancillaries to Australia ?

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Sir, it is a fact that Australians are very interested so far as our engineering goods and heavy machinery are concerned. We have made very good efforts after the last meeting of the joint Trade Committee between India and Australia which was held in November, that is, the tenth meeting, and I would like to inform the House that for the first time in the history, India has entered into Australian automobile market by their booking 1,000 jeeps from Mahendra and Mahendra. Further possibilities are now being explored in many other areas. The hon. Member must also be aware that BHEL—Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited—is also now about to complete a programme to enter into South Australia. Their programme is to electrify the railway system in Victoria and to go there with 250 MW power boiler programme. So, these are the areas we have started and we are getting the response.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Sir, the Australian market has, more or less, been ignored hitherto, but I am happy that the Government is making some efforts to improve our trade with Australia. From the figure mentioned by the hon. Minister, it is found that the balance of trade is now in their favour and we are importing more. I am sure, there are more items which we can export and turn the balance of trade in our favour. For example, he has not mentioned about the marine products. I understand that there is a demand in Australia

for shrimps and other marine products. There are other items also. So, I would like to know what specific steps have they taken to improve the exports to Australia and turn the balance of trade in our favour.

SHRI P.R. DAS MUNSI : Sir, our policy is to increase the exports to meet the balance of trade and not to cut imports where it is necessary. But as the hon. Member has stated about the marine products and certain other areas, we have already taken steps and measures through our concerned agencies to see that in these areas the exports go up. The only problem I would like to mention to the hon. Member is that very recently the Australian Government came out with a new scheme of five per cent less than the general tariff concession to the developing nations. This is helping us in certain sectors but not helping us in some other sectors, where the margin was fifteen per cent. We have very recently taken up this matter with the Australian Government. Positively we will get some result and will further boost up the exports in that sector.

Target for Improvement of Per Capita Use of Cloth

*619. **SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL :** Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any target has been fixed to improve the per capita use of cloth in the country during the Seventh Plan period ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) to what extent this target is going to be met by the textiles mills, power looms, handloom sector separately ;

(d) whether the progress is being monitored closely and if so, what was the achievement of each of three sectors so far ; and

(e) whether at the present rate of achievement, the target can be fulfilled by 1989 ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) to (e) A Statement is given below.