

to provide for service rendered in the grade of Controller to be reckoned for purposes of promotion in the Service. After consulting the concerned authorities, the required amendment was notified on 29th June, 1981. Necessary further steps to convene the meetings of the Selection Committee are under way. The number of officers eligible to be considered for confirmation and those working on *ad hoc* basis in the various grades is given below:—

	Eligible to be considered for confirmation	<i>ad hoc</i>
Grade I	3	5
Grade II	20	21
Grade III	101	7

Number of handlooms in the country

1857. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of handlooms in the country;

(b) the number of them which are in working conditions; and

(c) the rate of capacity utilization?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN): (a) The number of handlooms in the country is estimated to be 30.21 lakhs excluding domestic looms which number about 8 lakhs.

(b) The handloom sector being highly decentralised and spread throughout the country and run on cottage lines is characterised by idleness of looms from time to time which may be due to lack of inputs, finance and adequate market facilities. It is not possible to estimate the exact number of looms which may be active or idle at any point of time.

(c) Assuming an average production rate of 1500 metres per loom per year, the total capacity of handloom

sector could be said to be 4500 millions. Against this, the production has been estimated to be 3000 millions in 1980-81, working out to a utilisation rate of 66-2/3 per cent. By the terminal year of the Sixth Plan, the utilisation is sought to be raised further.

Target of handloom production in the Sixth Plan

1858. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the target of handloom production in the Sixth Five Year Plan;

(b) what is the basis of fixing the target; and

(c) what steps have been taken to reopen the closed units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN):

(a) The target of handloom production for the Sixth Five Year Plan has been set at 4100 million metres.

(b) The Sixth Plan target has been fixed keeping in view the current production in handlooms and the importance of the industry in terms of the national textile policy and 20-Point Programme. It is expected that 60 per cent of the commercial looms would be brought under the cooperative fold by the end of the Sixth Plan and this along with the looms under the special projects are expected to produce 1500 metres per loom per year. The target of 4100 million metres has been arrived at on this basis.

(c) The reopening of closed units in the handloom sector is sought to be brought about by the following measures:—

(1) Increasing the cooperative coverage and strengthening of the institutional frame work;

(2) Financial assistance for increasing the supply of inputs, particularly yarn by the creation of more spinning mills in the handloom Cooperative sector;

(3) Financial assistance for increasing the marketing of handloom fabrics;

(4) Setting up of pre-loom and post-loom processing facilities for increasing the marketability of the handloom products;

(5) Gradual shift of the obligation of the production of controlled cloth from the mill sector to the handloom sector;

(6) Modernisation of the looms, thus increasing their productivity; and

(7) Provision of design support and improved technology through a chain of Weavers' Service Centres and Institutes of Handloom Technology.

Ash content in the coking coal supplied to SAIL

1859. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of ash content in the coking coal supplied to the Steel Authority of India;

(b) what steps have been taken to reduce the ash content in the coking coal;

(c) whether he is aware that every percentage increase in the ash content of coking coal decreases the productivity of the blast furnaces by as much as 3.5 per cent and it also increases the coke consumption rate by as much as 3 per cent; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB KUMAR MUKHERJEE):

(a) The percentage of ash in prime and medium coking coal supplied to the SAIL Steel Plants by the Washeries during 1980-81 has been in the range of 20—23.8 per cent and 18.5—21.9 per cent respectively.

(b) and (d) Among the steps taken to reduce the ash content in coking coal, mention may be made of the following:—

(i) Improving the quality of raw coal fed into the washeries;

(ii) A fine coal washery section is being commissioned at Dugda I and II washeries in order to beneficiate—6 mm fraction coal;

(iii) A froth floatation section is also being added at Dugda II washery to beneficiate extremely fine coal;

(iv) Import of low ash coking coal to be used in suitable blend with indigenous coal (this has so far been possible only at Bhilai and Rourkela Steel Plant); and

(v) With the commissioning of Sudamdih and Monidih washeries, it is expected that there would be some improvement in the quality of coking coal.

(c) Yes, Sir.

1860. [Transferred to the 14th September, 1981].

Amount written off as bad debt by AIR India

1861. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI:
SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rs. 4 crores in foreign exchange favouring