

which appeared in the Economic Times of the 1st December, 1977 under the caption "Ministerial row over Coking Coal Import";

(b) if so, whether any proposal has been made to import coking coal from Australia and other places;

(c) what will be the landed cost of imported coking coal from Australia;

(d) whether any team was sent to Australia to discuss the feasibility of importing coking coal from that country;

(e) if so, who were the members of the team and what expenses were incurred in this connection; and

(f) whether it is a fact that the Coal India Ltd. has opposed the import of coking coal; and if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government has not yet taken any firm decision for import of low-ash coal from Australia or other places. The technical and economic implications (including landed cost) of importing low-ash coking coal for blending purposes, in view of limited reserves and relatively high-ash content of Indian coking coals, are under examination by Government.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(f) It is not a fact that Coal India Ltd. has opposed the import of coal. Government's final decision in this matter will be taken after considering the views of the concerned Ministries.

Statement

The members of the team that visited Australia to assess the suitability of Australian coals were:

(i) Shri K. C. Mohan, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants Ltd.

(ii) Shri G. Venugopala, Engineering Manager, Metallurgical and Engineering Consultants Ltd.

The expenses incurred on the visit were about Rs. 63,000.

'676. [Transferred to the 20th December, 1977.]

Cultural Agreement with Mozambique

*677. SHRI HIMMAT SINH:
SHRI HARSH DEO MALA-
VIYA: SHRI NRIPATI RANJAN
CHOUDHURY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has recently signed any cultural agreement with Mozambique and Angola; and

(b) What steps Government propose to take to establish cultural and educational contacts with these countries for the benefit of persons of Indian origin who have settled in these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) No. Sir:

(b) We have concluded agreement* with several countries covering cultural and educational cooperation. At the same time, we are conscious of the need for meeting the special requirements in cultural and educational fields of persons of Indian origin settled abroad and we are currently examining steps to be taken in this regard.

Irregularities in the P.F. Organisation

♦878. SHRI BHAIKAB CHANDRA
MAHANTI: SHRI PATITPABAN
PRA-DHAN: