

(c) and (d) As regards (i) above, the Railway Administration sent an interim reply on 11-8-70 and is examining the request for a meeting.

As regards (i), it has already been examined and it has not been possible to accept the same.

ELECTION EXPENSES

993. SHRI SALIL KUMAR GAN-
GULY :

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE :

SHRI NIREN GHOSH :

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY :

SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA
MENON :

Will the Minister of LAW AND SOCIAL WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the Supreme Court judgement in the election case of Shri R. K. Birla to the effect that the law relating to election expenses and the relevant provisions by and large is ineffective in controlling election expenses; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE (SHRI JAGANATH RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Election Commission has made a number of recommendations for amendments to the Election Law. These recommendations *inter alia* include amendments to the Chapter relating to election expenses with a view to make elections less expensive and also for eliminating the chances of the various corrupt practices. In compliance with the assurance given to Parliament, arrangements are under way for referring the question of amendments to Election Law to a Joint Committee of the Houses for examination and report. Any decision in this behalf would depend upon the outcome of the deliberations in that Committee.

DATA OF CLOSED MILLS IN WEST BENGAL

994. SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE :

SHRI NIREN GHOSH :

SHRI MONORANJAN ROY :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of closed mills, the period of closure, and the number of workers involved in West Bengal as on the 13th October, 1970;

(b) what are the reasons for the closure of the mills.

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to reopen these closed mills;

(d) if so, the details of such steps taken and the results thereof; and

(e) if no steps have been taken by Government so far, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL TRADE (SHRI M. R. KRISHNA) : (a) The Government of West Bengal have informed that upto early June this year, the number of closed factories, during the preceding 3½ years, was 165 involving 22,481 employees.

(b) The main reasons for the closure of Mills in West Bengal are (a) Uneconomic operation and continuing loss, (b) want of finances and of raw materials (c) strained labour management relations and (d) managerial inefficiency.

(c) and (d) Some of the various steps taken by the Government to reopen the closed mills are as follows :

(i) The Industrial Development Bank of India has constituted a regional committee at Calcutta for the Eastern Region to guide and advise the regional office for sanction of financial assistance. The regional office has been given powers to deal with requests for refinance or direct financial assistance up to Rs. 20 lakhs.

(ii) The IDBI would provide special technical/or financial assistance to cases sponsored by the banks or financial institution for such assistance.

(iii) The Industrial Development Bank is drafting a Memorandum and Articles of Association of the proposed industrial reconstruction corporation and is taking care of the various administrative arrangements and legal formalities.

(iv) In the cases where the period of closure is at least six months as on 1-8-70 and one of the main reasons of closure is financial difficulty the State Government have declared to

provide the following concessions subject to the reopening of closed units by 31-12-70:—

(a) In making purchases for the Government, preference will be given to industries located in West Bengal.

(b) 15 per cent price preference will be given for all state purchases from small industries sector.

(c) Sales tax paid on raw materials purchased or on finished products produced, by a new unit may be refunded by way of loan, subject to a maximum of 8 per cent of the paid-up equity capital per annum, for a period of five years. This loan will be interest free if repayment is made in five annual instalments at the end of 15 years and will be admissible to units paying at least Rs. 25,000/- per annum as Sales tax.

(d) Sales tax and Entry tax, if any, leviable on capital equipment, acquired by a new unit on or after 1-4-70 and before 31-3-72, will be refunded.

(e) Octroi or Entry tax leviable on raw materials imported direct will be refunded.

(v) Government are making every effort to settle labour-management problems. From 20-3-70 to 28-5-70, 7 lock-outs, involving 11725 workmen, were settled and 7 closed units involving 3803 were reopened.

(vi) Government is also actively engaged in removing raw material scarcity in the State. One of the measures adopted by the Government, for this purpose, is the liberal import policy declared by the Government whereby small and medium scale units can import raw material upto 50% of their consumption during the year 1969.

(e) Does not arise.

FRAUD IN 'B' POWER HOUSE SIDING AT HARDUAGANJ STATION

995. SHRI J. P. YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a case of fraud involving over Rs. 30,000 in 'B' Power House Siding at Harduaganj Station of Allahabad Division relating to demurrage charges during July, 1970 has been brought to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, who are the officers responsible and the action taken against them and if no action has been taken the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of complaints received by Government in regard to above fraud case;

(d) whether any action has been taken to seize the relevant records to safeguard the interest of the Railways; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GULAZARILAL NANDA):

(a) to (c) Two complaints have recently been received alleging commission of fraud in the matter of demurrage charges recoverable in respect of wagons for the 'B' Power House siding at Harduaganj during July 1970. The complaints are under enquiry. Irregularities, if any, and the officials responsible therefor will be known only on completion of enquiries.

(d) Records relevant for the purpose of enquiry have been secured.

(e) Does not arise in view of reply to part (d) above.

REMOVAL OF CHAIRMAN, HEAVY ELECTRICALS BHOPAL

996. SHRI K. L. N. PRASAD : Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL TRADE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of the Heavy Electricals Plant at Bhopal has been removed from office; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL TRADE (SHRI M. R. KRISHNA) :

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

ELEVEN-POINT PROGRAMME FOR RAILWAYS

997. SHRI K. L. N. PRASAD : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether he had called a meeting of high officials of the Railways on the 7th June, 1970 to discuss the Eleven Point Programme for effecting improvement in the Railways;