

to say whether this proposal would be included therein.

HINDUSTAN STEEL LIMITED

957. SHRI T. V. ANANDAN : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a contract between the Hindustan Steel Limited and the Soviet Union has recently been entered into for the sale of steel products worth about Rs. 50 crores to the Soviet Union ; and

(b) if so, the details of the contract?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL, MINES AND METALS (SHRI CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK) : (a) and (b) Hindustan Steel Limited have not recently entered into any contract with the Soviet Union for sale of steel. They had, however, signed a contract with M/s. Promsyro-import, the Trade Organisation of the USSR Government, in February, 1968 for supply of six lakh tonnes of steel at the rate of two lakh tonnes each during the calendar years 1968, 1969 and 1970. While the description, technical specifications, prices etc. in respect of deliveries during the year 1968 have been settled, the same in respect of deliveries during 1969 and 1970 have yet to be decided. Negotiations for deliveries during 1969 will be commencing soon.

The total value of the contract would be approximately Rs. 40 crores.

DECLINE IN RAILWAY TRAFFIC

958. SHRI K. SUNDARAM : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was a decline in railway traffic between April and July this year; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the measures taken to prevent further decline for the remaining period of the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) There has been no decline in the revenue earning goods traffic during the year 1968-69 (April to July) when compared to the corresponding period of the pre-

vious year. As against 52.39 million tonnes of revenue earning traffic loaded by rail from April to July, 1967, the Indian Railways actually lifted 53.30 million tonnes from April to July, 1968. There has, however, been a decline in passengers booked from 768 millions to 738 millions during the same period.

(b) Originating goods traffic has increased. The reasons for the decline in passenger traffic are under investigation but there are indications that increased availability of road transport, diversion of short distance traffic to road, economic recession, drought conditions in certain parts of the country and early termination of marriage season in certain areas were contributory factors.

RURAL INDUSTRIES PROGRAMME

959. CHOUDHARY A. MOHAMMAD: Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to adopt a new success-oriented policy in future to implement the rural industries programme; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED) : (a) and (b) A statement is attached.

STATEMENT

The Rural Industries Projects Programme was initiated by the Planning Commission during 1962-63. To start with, 45 areas were selected in 15 States and four Union Territories of Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and Goa. Four more areas near large-scale industrial projects of Bhilai, Durgapur, Ranchi and Bhadravati were added in 1965. Each project covers 3-5 CD. blocks and a population of 3-5 lakhs.

2. Broadly speaking, the projects aimed at evolving effective techniques, methods and programmes for the intensive development of small industries in selected areas with high incidence of unemployment and also to gain experience in adopting the techniques under different sets of conditions. The selection of the areas followed the criteria laid down by the Planning Commission -which are as under:

(i) areas with favourable agricultural conditions and heavy pressure of population ;

(ii) where agriculture is undertaken mainly under unirrigated conditions; and there is considerable need for additional employment;

(iii) areas with considerable unemployment because of unfavourable natural conditions and lack of development of potential resources ;

(iv) tribal and other backward areas ;

(v) areas in which large industrial projects have been or are being established, so as to achieve integrated industrial development, \ agriculture and small industries being developed together within the region of the industrial projects; and

(vi) areas in the neighbourhood of rural universities and institutes.

3. An Evaluation Study Group for "Rural Industries Projects Programme was appointed by the RIPC with a view to reviewing the various aspects of the programme and "to make suitable suggestions with regard to the development of the programme. The Study Group has laid great emphasis on the selection of areas for rural industrialisation. It has observed that location is key factor in the development of small industries in rural areas and if the objective is to achieve success in industrialising rural areas, selection of the areas should be made very carefully. Areas with necessary basic facilities including availability of power in key growth and focal points and good

system of transport and communications should be selected for the programme. Apart from infra-structure the other essential factors which help growth of industries are availability of local resources, agricultural, forest, animal husbandry and mineral, etc. The report of the Study Group was discussed in the previous meeting of the Rural Industries Planning Committee. Agreeing with the recommendations of the Study Group regarding selection of areas, the Committee observed that since faster growth of industries is called for, existence of essential basic facilities is absolutely necessary and the new projects should be located in such areas only which possess necessary economic and social overheads and other basic facilities conducive to the growth of industries. The Committee has, therefore, recommended that a success-oriented criteria should be laid down for the selection of new projects.

4. A proposal for setting up additional Rural Industries Projects during the Fourth Plan period is under consideration of the Government.

ALLOTMENT OF RUSSIAN TRACTORS

960. SHRI M. VERO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the approximate time taken by the State Trading Corporation to allot Russian made tractors (D.T. 14) from the date of its actual booking?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI) : Orders for Russian made tractors DT. 14B were till now being booked by the Indian agents of the Russian suppliers or the dealers/sub-dealers and supplied by them to the actual users direct on the basis of 'first come first served'. S.T.C. does not allot tractors. No accurate indication of the time taken by the agents for supplying tractors can be given as this will depend upon various factors like the number of orders booked, availability of tractors, etc.

It is proposed to arrange future distribution of tractors through the Agro-Industries Corporations.