

(a) what is the organisational set up of the Marketing and Sales Organisation of the Indian Railways and their *modus operandi*;

(b) whether the Railways have any plan to associate experts in marketing, advertising and public relations with this organisation to improve its working; and

(c) whether it is proposed to take advantage of the advice of business organisations also in this connection?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): (a) Each Zonal Railway has a special Marketing & Sales Organisation in charge of a specially selected senior officer functioning under the Chief Commercial Superintendent of the Railways. This 'Officer, known as the Marketing & Sales Superintendent, is assisted by a staff consisting of a junior officer and a few inspectors.

The officers and inspectors of this organisation keep in close touch with trade and industry, ascertain their requirements and the traffic they have to offer and take steps to provide a satisfactory service to the customer. The organisation also conducts market research, prospecting and development of traffic.

(b) and (c) Though the Railways have no plan of formally associating any business organisation or outside experts in marketing, advertising and public relations, some of the railway officers are being given specialised training in the latest marketing techniques in association with Institutes of Management and Premier Industrial organisations.

PRECIOUS STONES

209. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been decline in the export of precious stones from India during recent months;

(b) if so, what are the figures of the export of precious stones and gems from India in the years 1966-67 and 1967-68, respectively;

(c) whether it is a fact that unfinished precious stones are imported to India for purposes of being polished and then exported; and

(d) if so, what are the value of precious stones which were imported in the year 1966-67?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE: (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) and (b) Exports of precious and semiprecious stones during 1966-67 amounted to Rs. 10.02 crores, working out to a monthly average of about Rs. 84 lakhs. Except for exports in January, 1968 (Rs. 27.48 lakhs), the exports in recent months have been better than the average. Total exports of these items during 1967-68 (April, 1967 to January, 1968) have amounted to Rs. 10.46 crores.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Imports of precious and semiprecious stones during 1966-67 were of the order of Rs. 5.82 crores.

RETRENCHMENT OF SUBORDINATE CIVIL ENGINEERS IN S.E. RAILWAY

210. SHRI A. D. MANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that widespread retrenchment of subordinate Civil Engineers has been started in the South Eastern Railway;

(b) the number of engineers who have been retrenched so far; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to give them alternate employment?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.