

(b) the extent to which Indian trade has increased as a result of this agreement; and

(c) whether any long term plan has been drawn up to derive benefit from the Agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) and (c) Attention of the hon. Member is invited to the Answer to Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 190 by Shri N. R. M. Swamy, given on the 30th March, 1967, along with which a copy of the Joint Communique issued at the end of the Tripartite Conference was placed on the Table of the House. To take follow-up action on the decisions taken in the Tripartite Conference, it was agreed among the three delegations to set up three Working Groups to deal with and make recommendations on various aspects of co-operation in three main fields. Working Group I was to consider measures for expansion of trade, including exchange of tariff preferences, simplification and adaptation of trade regulations, payments procedures and credit facilities in support of industrial co-operation. Working Group II was to consider possibilities of augmentation and readjustments in production arrangements as a basis for increased trade exchanges between the three countries. Working Group III was to consider improvements of maritime transport arrangements, including the establishment of a joint shipping line.

Working Group I held its first meeting in Cairo from 14th to 23rd February, 1967, in which certain ground rules for exchange of tariff preferences among the three countries were adopted and a common list of items for exchange of tariff preferences was drawn. The list is to be finalised in the next meeting of the Working Group, scheduled tentatively for the first fortnight of September 1967. Working Group II is going to meet shortly. Working Group III met in Yugoslavia from the 17th to 21st April, 1967 and considered the possi-

bilities of and measures for improvement of maritime services between the three countries. Regarding co-operation in the field of technical assistance, the three Governments have taken steps to exchange information on the various facilities available in the respective countries.

(b) Follow up action on the decisions of the Conference is still in the process of being taken. It is therefore too early to make an assessment of the likely improvement in India's trade with UAR and Yugoslavia.

HEAVY PLATES AND VESSELS PROJECT

548. **SHRI ARAVINDAKSHAN KAIMAL:** Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has stated recently that the Heavy Plate and Vessels Project in the public sector will be set up at Visakhapatnam in spite of the experts opinion preferring Cochin; and

(b) if so, the details of the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED): (a) and (b) On technological evaluation of the sites proposed for their consideration, the team of Czech experts considered the sites at Madras, Cochin and Visakhapatnam as *prima facie* suitable for the establishment of the Heavy Plates and Vessels Project and placed them in the following order; Cochin; Madras; Visakhapatnam. After giving careful consideration to the recommendations of the expert team and taking into account other relevant factors including the nearness of the source of raw materials and the proposal for the establishment of a similar plant by M/s. Fertilizers and

Chemicals Travancore Ltd. in Cochin, which was being processed separately, Government decided to locate the first of the two proposed projects for the manufacture of fertilizer and chemical equipment at Visakhapatnam. The implementation of this project has since been taken up by Bharat Heavy Plate and Vessels Ltd., a Company wholly owned by the Government of India.

This information was given in reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on 9th June, 1967.

12 NOON

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED STAYING AWAY FROM DUTY OF
A LARGE NUMBER OF FIREMEN IN
CERTAIN SECTION OF THE
SOUTHERN RAILWAY

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Railways to the reported staying away from duty of a large number of firemen in certain sections of the Southern Railway and the consequent cancellation of several trains on that Railway.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): Sir, it is understood that on 25-7-67 the unrecognised Southern Railway Firemen's Council which is a sectional body decided to go on mass sick leave on and from 26-7-67 as a protest against non-redressal of certain grievances of this category of staff such as, revision of the classification of loco running staff from "continuous" to "intensive", and increase in Mileage Allowance, besides other local grievances like, filling up of vacancies; increase in Leave Reserve percentage, confirmation of all loco running staff and cancellation of punishments etc. and this mass sick leave has resulted in dis-location of certain passenger and Goods services in three out of six

divisions of Southern Railway, namely, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Olavakot.

As the hon'ble Members are aware, under the Parliament Negotiating Machinery functioning for over 15 years now on the Railways, the recognised Unions and their affiliated recognised Federations could discuss matters affecting all categories of Railway employees across the table, at the different tiers of this Machinery. On the Southern Railway, there are two recognised Unions which could discuss these matters with the local Railway Administration or alternatively their affiliated Federations, namely, All India Railwaymen's Federation or the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen, could discuss these matters with the Railway Board. Instead of using this Machinery and finding out a solution for the grievances, if any, certain Firemen belonging to certain unrecognised Sectional Associations have resorted to this agitation.

All steps have been taken to maintain the Train services as far as possible and minimise the inconvenience to the travelling public and to maintain the movement of essential commodities etc.

Certain Members of Parliament have recently met me and discussed the grievances of this category of staff with me and I have assured them that once normally is restored the matter will be sympathetically examined and appropriate action taken. In the circumstances, it is hoped that normal running of Train services would be restored early.

श्री राजनारायण (उत्तर प्रदेश) : लखनऊ
से दिल्ली में तीन तीन घंटा बराबर देर होती
है ।

SHRI A. P. CHATTERJEE: Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that though he has catalogued the grievances alleged to be agitating the minds of these firemen, actually the griev-