

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) to (d) The Railway Reforms Committee have recommended closure of 40 uneconomic branch lines on all three gauges, where adequate road transport facility exists to meet the transport needs of the area satisfactorily and the railways are suffering losses in operating them, the amount of losses suffered during 1983-84 on these 40 lines being about Rs. 815 Lakhs. As recommended by the Committee, the State Governments concerned have been addressed requesting them either to agree for closure of these lines or share 50 per cent of the losses suffered by the railways on such of the lines as they may desire to be continued.

Vacant Post of Chairman Central Social Welfare Board

533. SHRIMATI D.K. BHANDARI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL AND WOMEN'S WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the post of Chairman of Central Social Welfare Board has not been filled up for quite sometime;

(b) if so, whether because of this situation many States including Sikkim have not received their fund timely from the Board for their welfare activities ; and

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to rectify the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR) : (a) The post of Chairman, Central Social Welfare Board has fallen vacant with effect from 19.1.85.

(b) and (c) No, Sir, The Executive Director of the Board has been empowered by the Executive Committee of the Board to exercise financial and administrative powers of the Chairman. Funds allocated to Central Social Welfare Board during the year 1984-85 and the additional amount given to the Board at the end of the year, have been fully utilised. Sikkim and other States are receiving funds from the Board for their welfare activities. Government has already

initiated efforts to appoint Chairman of the Central Social Welfare Board.

[Translation]

Transportation of Coal and Pulses

534. SHRI SARFARAZ AHMAD : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether, keeping in view the acute shortage of coal in industrial establishments and power houses in the country, the Railways propose to accord priority to the transport, of coal;

(b) if so, when priority would be given to the transport of coal; and

(c) whether, keeping in view the shortage of pulses in different parts of the country, transport of pulses would also be accorded priority ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) and (b) The transportation of coal for power houses and industrial establishments is arranged under priority 'C' of the Preferential Traffic Schedule which is a sufficiently high priority.

(c) Movement of pulses when sponsored by State Government and Food Corporation of India, has already been accorded sufficiently high priority i.e. priorities 'C' and 'D' respectively of the Preferential Traffic Schedule. Movement of non-sponsored pulses is done under priority 'E'.

[English]

Indo USSR Agreement for Thermal Power Plants

535. SHRI V. TULSIRAM : Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether an agreement between India and the USSR for providing equipment and technical documentation for thermal power stations in the country, was recently signed;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement and the names of the thermal power stations for which necessary assistance will be provided by the USSR ;