

### Unilateral freight hikes by Conference Lines

6307. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exports by shippers from East Coast to USA ports have been badly hit by unsatisfactory service and frequent unilateral freight hikes by Conference Lines;

(b) whether the Eastern India Shipper Association has started a shipping service on cooperative basis; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government to this proposal and encouragement by the Government to this new venture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI BUTA SINGH):

(a) It would not be correct to say that exports from the East Coast of India to US ports have been badly hit because of unsatisfactory service even though the shippers from the East Coast have been representing about the manner in which the American-based Conferences impose freight rates without adequate consultation with Indian shippers.

(b) and (c). Government have seen some reports about the Eastern India Shippers Association starting a shipping service on cooperative basis from Calcutta for US Ports. Government have not been specifically approached for any assistance by any agency in this regard.

### Scholarships to Wards and other benefits to Bidi Workers

6308. SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that scholarships to the wards and other amenities given to the Bidi

workers are not reaching to them because the owners of Bidi factories are not signing the identification certificates; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJIAH): (a) Complaints to this effect have come to notice of Government.

(b) Instructions have been issued for acceptance of identification certificates issued under Rule 40 of the Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Rules by the concerned Municipal Board, Zila Parishad, Panchayat Board, Panchayat Samiti, etc. This would obviate to a large extent the difficulties being experienced by some bidi workers in taking benefits of welfare schemes.

### Mejhia-Haldia Line

6309. SHRI AJIT KUMAR SAHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to construct a new railway line from Mejhia to Haldia via Bankura;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) when Government propose to start the construction work?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (c). Haldia is already connected with Bankura by a BG line. The engineering-cum-traffic survey undertaken at the instance and cost of the West Bengal Government for Bankura-Mejhia-Raniganj BG rail link completed in 1977 revealed that the financial justification for this line depends basically on the movement of coal from Mejhia Coalfield to Kolagha Thermal Power Station. So far there have been no firm indications from