

of the software, hotel and tourism industries in the services area. This has created employment opportunities. If you see the unemployment rate, it has created employment opportunities. If you see the unemployment rate, it has come down considerably. In 1987-88, the overall unemployment rate is 3.77 per cent. In 1993-94, if you see it, after the introduction of the New Economic Policy, it has come down to 2.56 per cent. Therefore, this New Economic Policy has helped to create employment opportunities.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI : Speaker Sir, it is requested to Hon. Minister to increase the opportunities of employment through foreign investment and what he quoted in his reply, is unsatisfactory. It is requested that foreign investment may be increased in our country. But the Government has not cleared to what extent unemployment was removed by labour oriented foreign investment. I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether any time bound, planned programme has been chalked out to bring down the unemployment

[English]

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM : It is up to the Planning Commission. They have to chart out the programmes. There are Departments which are creating employment opportunities. The Urban Affairs and Employment Department has been creating employment opportunities in the urban areas. The Rural Development is creating employment opportunities in the rural areas.

[English]

Transportation of Cement

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*310. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA :
SHRI ANIL BASU :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways cannot provide wagons to the cement industry for movement of coal to cement plants and to transport cement out of cement plants and that despatch of cement by rail is declining every year;

(b) whether it is also a fact that transportation of Coal and Cement by Road instead of by Rail means additional oil import of Rs. 2500 Crores a year in foreign exchange;

(c) if so, what action the Government has been taking to take over transportation of these two bulk commodities, to get back their due revenue of Rs. 8495 crores and to reduce oil import by Rs. 2500 crores a year; and

(d) if not, the details of actual shortage in rail transport, actual loss of revenue and actual additional oil import involved and action taken to prevent them?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT

(a) At present, there is no difficulty in clearing the traffic offered by Cement plants for movement of cement or for movement of coal to cement plants. There have been occasions in the past when wagon difficulty was experienced. However, despatch of cement by rail increased every year as compared to the preceding year except during 1992-93 and 1994-95.

(b) The statistics referred to are not available. At present, Railway have adequate wagons to transport coal and cement.

(c) and (d). The requirement of wagons is reviewed continuously and whenever wagon shortage is felt, additional wagons are acquired. Steps taken to improve loading of bulk commodities include induction of container service for movement of cement, introduction of crack rakes of air-brake stock on specified circuits with intensive maintenance to give extended run, intensive monitoring at terminals for loading and unloading to reduce detention to wagons etc. These measures have brought about improvement in wagon turn round and thereby improved overall availability of wagons for freight traffic. The actual loading of total coal, coal for "others" including cement sector and loading of cement for the current year, upto October, 1996, is more than the pro-rata target for the current financial year as well as the actual loading during the corresponding period of 1995-96.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, he has admitted that there was some shortage of wagons... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI LALMUNI CHAUBEY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have given notice regarding the breach of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER : Question Hour is going on at present why do you put it now?

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I am putting a supplementary question... (Interruptions) He has admitted that there was some shortage of wagons and because of that, the movement of cement from the industry to the consumers was affected. There was a news item in the month of September saying that the cement manufacturers had decided to close down some of their plants because of non-availability of sufficient number of wagons. Cement is one of the bulk freight traffic of the Indian Railways.

12.00 hrs.

In order to increase the availability of wagons, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he will take steps

