

ble blackmarket is rampant in coal business and unscrupulous mine-owners have been selling coal at fabulous prices without any difficulty of wagon shortage? Firstly, may I know how they have been able to get wagons? Secondly, the Minister has stated that the wagon position has improved and the decline in supply of coal has been attributed to the transport position. Now that the transport position is satisfactory, may I know whether you are satisfied with the present coal wagon movement, which is otherwise criticised as irrational? Secondly, have you estimated what is likely to be the production with the sustained supply of the quantity of wagons which you are getting now?

SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN : According to the present estimates, we feel that if the railways could maintain a steady supply of 8,600 wagons per day then there should be no shortage of coal in the country. In the beginning of this year the railways were supplying approximately 7,262 wagons per day. In March 1972 they have supplied 8,342 wagons. So, the situation has improved very considerably. There is still a shortfall of about 400 to 500 wagons. As to the question as to how the private traders are able to get wagons and sell coal at fantastically high prices, I cannot answer it because I do not allot wagons.

Neutralisation of South-East Asia

*684 **SHRI SHRIKISHAN MODI :** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and Thailand have favoured neutralisation of South-East Asia by making it free from big power politics ;

(b) whether the representatives of the two countries had met recently and had discussions for free Indian ocean ; and

(c) whether any agreements were reached in this regard and if so, the nature thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SWARAN SINGH) (a) : The Government of India hold the view that the South-East Asian region should be free from Great Power influences. The

Government of Thailand has been a party to the November 1971 Declaration by the ASEAN countries that they are determined to exert initially necessary efforts to secure the recognition of and respect for South-East Asia as a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality free from any form or manner of interference by outside powers.

(b) and (c) : During discussions between the representatives of the two Governments held towards the end of March, views were exchanged on this and other subjects of mutual interest. No formal agreement was attempted or desired by either side

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : क्या चीन ने मार्गेशम को बहुत अधिक मात्रा में ऋण दिया है और आपस में राजनैतिक सम्बन्ध भी कायम कर रहे हैं ? क्या इस में आप को कोई असर पड़ेगा, अगर पड़ेगा तो क्या पड़ेगा ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : I am not sure whether it arises out of the present question Chinese supply of equipment to other countries.

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : मेरे प्रश्न का जवाब ही नहीं मिला ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह तो इस में आता ही नहीं लेकिन अगर किसी तरह इस में लाइये तो फिर जवाब मिल जायेगा ।

श्री श्रीकिशन मोदी : हिन्द महासागर के सभी टापुओं को विगपावर्स से खनरा न हो हम के बारे में क्या आप कोई मीठी बातचीत करके कोई नतीजा निकालना चाहते हैं ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : This matter was discussed in the Lusaka conference of nonaligned countries and there was agreement that every effort should be made to prevent the establishment of basis by big naval powers in the Indian Ocean area, and the countries of the region, the littoral States, are in consultation with each other to ensure this.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN : In view of the importance of this subject, may

I know whether the Government of India have taken up this matter with other important countries like Australia and New Zealand and if they have not done so, will Government consult them now ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : I agree that this is a matter of importance for all countries in the region and Australia and New Zealand fall in that category. The Foreign Minister of Australia is likely to visit us towards the end of this month and I am sure this matter may come up for discussion then.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY : Will it be correct to infer that no other country except Thailand has evinced interest in this Asian security system, and will the Government of India have a dialogue with China for ensuring Asian security ?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : This question does not relate to Asian security as such, but I have said that ASEAN countries have jointly made a declaration. In that group, Thailand is one country and there are other countries also. Therefore, it is not correct to say that Thailand alone has subscribed to this statement.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH : In view of the fact that Thailand has favoured neutralisation of the Indian Ocean, may I know whether the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation, which includes Thailand also still holds good or any indication has been made to review the whole position to achieve this objective for which Thailand and our country had discussions?

SHRI SWARAN SINGH : It is a fact that Thailand is a member of SEATO, but it is difficult for us to comment as to whether SEATO is still valid, when all these other ideas are being projected, because we have always been totally opposed to SEATO and CENTO. Our attitude in this respect is categorical. At the same time, it is for the member countries of SEATO and CENTO to decide as to whether these old treaties have any validity today or not.

I would be disinclined to raise that matter with the member countries of SEATO.

Celebration of Indian Independence Silver Jubilee in Indian Embassies

*685. **SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI :** Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether instructions have been sent to our Embassies abroad to observe Indian Independence Silver Jubilee ; and

(b) if so, whether it has also been stressed on them to highlight the image of great Bapujee of Indian and his life in poster, article etc.?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) (a) and (b) : Yes, Sir.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSI : May I know from the hon. Minister whether in view of the Silver Jubilee occasion, a delegation consisting of prominent freedom fighters, excluding Members of Parliament, will be sent abroad and also may I know from the hon Minister whether this specific function will be observed in Singapore to remember Netaji Subash Chandra Bose ?

SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH : These are two very valuable suggestions made by the hon Member. We will give due consideration to them.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : May I know whether the Government of India have issued any kind of guide-lines or directives to our Embassies abroad as to what sort of programmes would be appropriate for them to observe in connection with the 25th Independence Anniversary and, if so, what is the general nature of the guide-lines given to them. We do not want them to hold different types of programmes.

SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH : The general guide-lines have been laid down. If I may inform the hon. Member, a high-powered Committee has been set up by the Government of India to go into the whole question as to what kind of programmes should be drawn up for celebrating the 25th Independence Anniversary in an appropriate manner. They have drawn up a programme