

ment Board in January, 1979 with following main parameters:—

- (i) Capital cost . Rs. 11.88 crores.
- (ii) Annual ore production capacity. . 1,50,000 tonnes.
- (iii) Annual concentrates production—
- a. Lead concentrate 11,000 tonnes.
- b. Copper concentrate . . . 1,288 tonnes.
- (iv) Life of the project. . . 14 years.

Work is in progress on ground to implement the project.

Unauthorised exploitation of precious stone in Orissa

2259. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India are aware of the availability of the precious stones in some areas of Bolangir District in Orissa and if so, what steps the Central Government have taken to prevent its unauthorised exploitation by some private parties; and

(b) whether the Government of India are proposing to work out these areas for commercial purposes in collaboration with the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Information is being obtained from the State Government and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Decline in foreign trade of chromite ores

2260. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for gradual decline of foreign trade of chromite ores with other countries; and

(b) whether levy of excessive export duty in chromite ores by Government is one of the reasons and if so, whether Government propose to abolish the export levy to boost up its export trade?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Chrome ore exports have shown a gradual increase from 1977 onwards.

(b) Question does not arise.

Government Opium and Alkaloid Factory, Neemuch (M.P.)

2261. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that there were allegations of irregularity in the Government Opium and Alkaloid Factory at Neemuch in the State of Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, whether Government have enquired into the matter and taken necessary action against the persons involved in the case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): (a) Yes, Sir. A representation dated 6-11-78 alleging certain irregularities in the Government Opium and Alkaloid Factory, Neemuch, was received from the Government Opium and Alkaloid Employees Sangh, Neemuch.

(b) The allegations made in the aforesaid representation were looked into. It was reported that the allegation relating to appointment of two persons against vacancies reserved for Schedule Tribes, on production of false certificates, was on investigation found be correct. While one of the person resigned on 11-4-79, the services of the second person were terminated with effect from 11-6-79. The allegations regarding other irregularities have not been substantiated.