

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Offers against Global Tender for the import of 4000 horse-power diesel locomotives:

— 20 nos. in fully assembled condition; and

— 10/20 nos. in knocked down condition for freight haulage are under consideration.

(b) These details will be known only after a decision has been taken on the offers.

(c) Global Tender includes procurement of the state of the art technology which will be adopted for the manufacture of improved version of diesel locomotive at Diesel Locomotive Works at Varanasi.

#### **Excessive use of power in Aluminium production**

842. SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that much more power in our Aluminium production units as compared to similar units in Canada, Norway and other foreign countries and this leads to escalation of cost of production;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken or proposed to be taken to economise the use of power by Aluminium plants in the public sector; and

(c) what other measures have been taken to bring down the cost of production of aluminium?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MINES IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SMT. RAMDULARI SINHA): (a) The power consumption in Indian aluminium smelters is comparable with the average power consumption of smelters in North America and Europe. Aluminium produced in India is, however, costlier because of higher cost of inputs particularly power tariffs and non-availability of steady and continuous power,

(b) and (c). Power consumption in a smelter is dependent on the technology adopted as well as adequacy and steadiness of power supply. The aluminium producers have been making endeavours to reduce energy consumption in the smelters through better control techniques. The smelter being set up by the National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), in Orissa, is based on the latest technology and its energy consumption will be comparable to the most modern smelters abroad. In order to ensure steady power supply, Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO) is setting up a Captive Thermal Power Plant. They are also making various experiments to improve the performance of the Old Soderberg Vertical Stud System, such as use of microprocessors for detection of anode effect, use of lithium carbonate, modification in alumina calciners etc.

#### **Licensing guidelines for mini steel plants**

843. SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are revising licensing guidelines for mini steel plants to meet the growing demand of mild steel in the country;

(b) whether Government are also considering a proposal to liberalise the facilities for enhancement of the capacity of existing mini steel plants on adoption of certain essential modernisation measures to improve their viability;

(c) whether Government have since finalised the new guidelines and if so, the details thereof and the expected impact of these new guidelines;

(d) whether Government are contemplating that the existing mini steel plants should have the latest technology and equipment which will lead to considerable cut in electric power consumption as also deployment of manpower; and

(e) if not, what other measures Government are contemplating to ensure that the mini steel plants become viable?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR): (a) to (c). The guidelines for grant of Industrial Licenses for Steel Industry including the expansion of capacities of mini steel plants are under review. These guidelines have taken into consideration the projections of demand and availability of steel for the future.

(d) and (e). A group has been constituted to identify measures for modernisation of mini steel plants by adoption of latest technology available in electric steel-making. Upgradation of technology in mini steel plants is likely to result in considerable saving in electric power consumption.

#### **Freight computerisation**

844. SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have been considering freight computerisation for the last 4 years and have received proposals from West Germany and National Informatics Centre (NIC);

(b) if so, whether these proposals have been evaluated;

(c) the agency which has done the evaluation; and

(d) the final decision, if any, taken in the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) The project on computerisation of Freight Operations Information System (Freight OIS) was sanctioned during 1982-83. A detailed Project Document was prepared by Indian Railways in October, 1986 with the assistance of Consultants, namely, M/s CANAC of Canada, and M/s DETECON of West Germany. A proposal from NIC has been received in April, 1987.

(b) to (d). The proposal received from NIC is under examination by the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS), and

is under discussion with NIC/Department of Electronics.

#### **Losses suffered by mini steel plants**

845. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESHWARI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether crisis have arisen due to continuing losses by mini steel plants;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(c) what action is being contemplated to overcome the crisis?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR): (a) and (b). Steel Furnace Association of India and Federation of Engineering Industries of India have represented to the Government regarding problems faced by mini steel plants. It has been represented that due to increase in input costs and fall in selling price of ingots, the mini steel plants are incurring cash losses.

(c) The custom duty on import of scrap has been reduced by 5% ad valorem with effect from 4th December, 1986 and adequate quantity of scrap has been made available to mini steel plants, through increased imports.

#### **EEC help for modernisation of mini steel industry**

846. SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESHWARI:  
SHRI H.N. NANJE GOWDA:  
SHRI G.S. BASAVARAJU:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether European Economic Community is considering to help the Mini Steel Industry in India for its modernisation;

(b) if so, whether a high level Indian delegation representing members of various agencies visited the European Economic Community countries;