

(b) the results achieved so far Statewise ; and

(c) further steps taken in this regard and the target fixed for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN : (a) A number of programmes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) have been under implementation to bring the weaker sections of society above poverty line. These programmes are aimed at increasing the income of the weaker sections by creation of assets leading to a steady flow of income or of employment.

(b) In the first four years of the Sixth Plan (1980—84), 12.58 million families have been assisted through the IRDP and 1,428 million mandays of employment have been generated through the NREP and the RLEGP.

(c) As envisaged in the Approach to the Seventh Five Year Plan, the package of poverty alleviation programmes will continue at an accelerated pace in the Seventh Plan period.

Development of Iron Ore Mines

23. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PAT-NAIK : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether steps have been taken for the development of iron ore mines in the country ;

(b) if so, the specific steps taken in last three years for the development of iron ore mines in Orissa ; and

(c) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c)'. The production capacity in Orissa is very large compared to the present production. Enhanced production of iron ore on account of increased domestic steel production or higher exports of iron ore is likely to be met from the existing capacities itself.

Setting up of Nickel Project in Sukinda, Orissa

24. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PAT-NAIK : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal to set up a Nickel Project near Sukinda in Orissa ;

(b) if so, the steps taken to implement the above proposal ; and

(c) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL, MINES AND COAL (SHRI VASANT SATHE) : (a) to (c). Sanction was issued earlier based on preliminary feasibility report envisaging the use of the indigenous technology for setting up of Sukinda Nickel Project. However, the project could not progress as the indigenous technology chosen failed when tried on pilot plant scale. The indigenous technology having failed, foreign consultancy had to be chosen judiciously. An expert deputed by Candian International Development Agency carried out a preliminary evaluation of the available data and according to his report, it would be necessary to undertake additional exploration, laboratory and pilot plant test work, before feasibility report can be prepared. A scheme for additional exploration has been prepared. Offers were invited from foreign consultants for review of exploration data and laboratory and pilot plant test work. Based on the offers received selection of a suitable consultant is under