

been received requesting essentially restriction on imports and changes in import duty. These have been taken into account while formulating the import policy for the current year.

Mine Safety Measures

1528. SHRI SATYENDRA NARAYAN SINHA: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the large number of mine accidents during the last two years were due to the neglect of mine safety measures for achieving production goals; and

(b) if so, whether this policy is being changed?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) There were 286 fatal accidents in different mines during the year 1976 as against 283 fatal accidents in 1975. The proportion of accidents classified as misadventure i.e. not considered as arising due to lapses on the part of one person or another was about 22 per cent during the years 1975 and 1976. This compares favourably with 28 per cent in 1974, 22 per cent in 1973 and 24 per cent in 1974. While there was increase in production of coal from 99 million tonnes in 1975 to about 107 million tonnes in 1976, there does not appear to be any evidence to conclude that this had in any way led to increased incidence of accidents.

(b) Does not arise; however Government have impressed on all mine managements that increase in production should not be at the cost of safety.

Withdrawal of Postal Despatch of Newspapers from Newspaper Centres

1529. SHRI R. KOLANTHAIVELU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether facilities which were available five years back for postal despatch of newspapers from newspaper centres to rural areas so as to reach the subscribers the very next day have been withdrawn;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor,

(c) whether Government are aware that the position is particularly bad in Salem District of Tamil Nadu; and

(d) whether Government propose to revive the procedure again?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b). There has been no change in the policy of handling and despatch of newspapers to rural areas.

(c) The existing arrangements for the transmission and delivery of newspapers in Salem District of Tamil Nadu are satisfactory and the system is working satisfactorily.

(d) Does not arise in view of the satisfactory position obtaining at present.

Accidents in Coal Mines during 1975 and 1976.

1530. SHRI RAMANAND TIWARY: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of accidents during 1975 and 1976 in various coal mines in the country; and

(b) the number of persons killed in these accidents and the total amount of compensation paid to the deceased on this account?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) and (b): The number of fatal accidents in various coal mines during the years 1975 and 1976 was 222 and 206 respectively. The total number of persons killed in these accidents was 663 (in-