

(c) As professional tax is like any other statutory tax which is not re-imbursed to the Government servants the professional tax paid by the P&T employees in Maharashtra State is not re-imbursable to them.

#### Water allowance of P and T Employees

2208. SHRI BAPUSAHEB PARULKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the limit for grant of water allowance for P & T employees serving in water scarcity area is fixed at Rs. 500 while this limit is fixed at Rs. 547 for Railway employees;

(b) why this disparity;

(c) whether Government propose to remove the disparity in payment of water allowance between P & T employees and Railway employees; and

(d) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) to (d). Information from the Railways is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

#### Exploration of Iron Ore deposits in Kerala

2209. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 1540 on the 23rd June, 1977 and state:

(a) whether the Kerala State In-

dustrial Development Corporation has completed its studies regarding the commercial exploitation of the iron ore deposits of Kozhikode District in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the decisions taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b). Investigations completed by the Kerala State Development Corporation have brought out that exploitation of Kozhikode deposits for production of iron ore concentrates/sponge iron would be uneconomic at present due to the high investment and low return.

#### Price of Steel

2210. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is considering for cutting down the domestic price of iron and steel keeping in view the lower prices prevailing in the major steel producing countries of the world; and

(b) if so, the comparative figures of prices prevailing in other countries of the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b). The prices of Steel items in different countries may not be directly comparable since the methods of pricing and sales are different. However, a broad idea of comparison may be had from the enclosed Statement. There is no proposal to reduce the prices at present.

#### STATEMENT

Category	Country			
	Japan	U.S.A.	U.K.	India
Fig Iron (Foundry)	..	1669.5	1553.3	907
Billets	..	..	2083.8	1582
			2345.2	

Category	Country			
	Japan	U.S.A.	U.K.	India
Reinforcing Bars & Rods . . . . .	1592.6 2018.3	1677.4	2099.6	1752
Wire rods . . . . .	2781.4	2519.1 2596.9	2622.3	2002
Angles . . . . .	1833.0 1870.6	..	..	1377
Structurals (Channels) . . . . .	2074.2	..	2998.2	1377
Beams/Joists . . . . .	2963.2	..	3015.6	1448
Heavy Rails . . . . .	..	..	3423.0	1281*
M. S. Plates . . . . .	2481.6 2518.3	..	2757.8	1523
H. R. Sheets . . . . .	2548.3	2437.9	2360.9	2097—2197
H. R. Coils . . . . .	..	..	2360.9	1997—1997
C. R. Sheets . . . . .	2944.0	2906.4	..	2466—2666
C. R. Coils . . . . .	..	..	3138.0	2522—2722
Skelp . . . . .	..	2437.9	3153.7	2056
Gal. Sheets Plain . . . . .	4110.9	3199.2	..	3322
Corrugated . . . . .	..	..	3880.1	3592

\*This includes the provisional increase of Rs. 275/- per MT allowed with effect from 1-4-1976.

Note :—

- (1) All prices are in Rs./MT
- (2) Conversion rate considered for calculating prices 2700 Yen=6.900£ =11.44\$=Rs. 100
- (3) Japan prices—prices indicated in Japan Metal Bulletin dated 19-11-1977. Prices are Dealer's prices for Tokyo city.
- (4) USA prices—prices indicate in American Metal Market dt. 8-11-1977. Prices quoted are FOB most Midwestern Mills of USA and are indicative only.
- (5) UK prices—prices indicated in LMB dated 8-11-1977. Prices are British Steel Corpn. basis prices, ex-having points as published by British Steel Corpn. in force w.c.f. 2-10-1977.
- (6) Indian prices are JPC base prices exclusive of applicable extras for size, quality etc.
- (7) Wherever the prices are not indicated the same is not available from the respective bulletin journal.

Deterioration of quality of Steel

2211. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has received complaints from consumers regarding deterioration in quality of steel produced in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to improve the quality during the coming year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b). Complaints regarding quality of steel