

last three years and the loss incurred are shown below:—

Year	Production of saleable steel ('000 tonnes)	Loss incurred (Rs. in crores)
1975-76	500	(—) 5.61
1976-77	542	(—) 16.31
1977-78	506	(—) 31.29 (provisional)

4. The decline in production of saleable steel as compared to the rated capacity of 800,000 tonnes per year was due to a number of factors, e.g., deteriorating quality of raw materials particularly coal, high coke rate, neglect of proper maintenance resulting in frequent breakdowns, outmoded technology, labour problems, etc. The increasing losses are principally due to the very heavy interest burden.

5. As mentioned earlier, the PRS and capital schemes have started showing results. It is expected that the performance of the company will continue to show improvement, particularly after it becomes a Division of SAIL in the near future.

#### **Introduction of Fall Back Wages in Bidi Industry**

1747. DR. SAROJINI MAHISHI:

**SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK:**

Will the Minister of PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the government of India have since taken any decision in regard to the introduction of "fall back" wage system in the bidi industry to ensure payment of minimum wages to the bidi workers in the country;

(b) if not, the reasons for delay; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) to (c). Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 the responsibility for fixing of minimum wages including fall-back wages for workers in bidi industry rests with the State Governments. The State Governments are generally of the view that fixation of fall-back wage in bidi industry needs careful examination and would be possible only after the enforcement machinery has been suitably strengthened.

#### **Indians Visited Pakistan to witness Cricket Match**

1749. SHRI AHMED M. PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians visited Pakistan to witness Cricket Tests in Lahore and Karachi respectively;

(b) whether any untoward incident happened; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SAMARENDRA KUNDU):

(a) According to information available with the Government at present, around 1600 Indians visited Pakistan to witness the Lahore Test Match and around 160 Indians visited Pakistan to witness the Karachi Test.

(b) and (c). The Government are not aware of any untoward incident having taken place during the Tests.

#### **Opening of Post Offices in Kerala**

1750. SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the places in the State of Kerala where sub-post offices and post offices are proposed to be opened during the current year;

(b) whether funds to execute the work have also been sanctioned; and