

pre-tax net profit of Rs. 193.45 crores as compared to Rs. 159.54 crores in the previous year.

(b) and (c). The overall performance of the public enterprises during the year 1978-79 compared to the previous year, i.e. 1977-78 showed improvement. Factors such as power shortages, inadequacy of raw materials, lack of balancing equipment, labour unrest, have held up a still-faster rate of improvement. Various steps have been taken and are being taken by the Government from time to time to improve the profitability of the public enterprises. To mention a few, improvement of capacity utilisation, removing bottlenecks in various phases of operation, provision of balancing facilities for better utilisation of the existing equipment, provision of captive power units to ensure smooth energy supply in selected industries, improved production planning and controlling techniques, introduction of incentive schemes, periodical review of performance against budget targets and improved inventory control practices, etc. are some of these steps.

Loss in Bharat Aluminium Company Limited

496. SHRI NIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state the total loss suffered by the Bharat Aluminium Company Limited so far and the causes thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): The total loss suffered by Bharat Aluminium Company upto 31-3-79 amounted to Rs. 28 crores, after providing for depreciation and interest on loan capital amounting to Rs. 27.80 crores and Rs. 20.49 crores respectively. Low capacity utilisation due to lack of power supply is the main reason for the losses. Details are given below:—

(i) The Alumina Plant commenced production in April, 1973 while the

first potline of the smelter commenced operation in May, 1975. The alumina plant was under-operated for lack of outlet for alumina which could only be exported to a limited extent.

(ii) Out of the four phases of the smelter, each with a capacity of 25,000 tonnes per annum, which became progressively ready for operation from May, 1975 to September, 1978, two phases are remaining idle due to non-availability of power from Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board to commission them. Out of the remaining two, one phase had to await power supply for over 18 months after it was ready. Even these two phases are not getting enough power to enable full capacity utilisation. They are now operating at 30 per cent of their capacity.

(iii) In addition to the above, the power supply from Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board is so erratic with frequent interruptions and outages that consumption of power per tonne of metal produced has gone up steeply and the cells have been damaged necessitating capital repairs.

Export of Gems and Jewellery

497. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there was considerable decline in the export of Gems and Jewellery during the year 1979-80 as against the exports in 1978-79;

(b) if so, the extent of shortfall in the export of Gems and Jewellery during that year and loss in foreign exchange as a result thereof; and

(c) steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES & STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). According to the figures furnished by the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council, Exports of gem & jewellery during April—December, 1979, are estimated to have been of the order of about Rs. 350 crores as compared to exports worth about Rs. 547 crores effected during April—December, 1978. The decline is mainly attributable to the shortfall in the exports of diamonds on account of acute recessionary conditions in the international market and also the high bank rates prevailing in the major buying countries. It is, however, expected that total exports of gem and jewellery during 1979-80 may be of the order of about Rs. 550 crores.

(c) Indian diamond industry, which is totally dependent on foreign markets, cannot remain insulated from the global depression in diamond trade. Though it is difficult to overcome such an international market phenomenon by any single country, efforts are being made to boost our exports of gem and jewellery. The Report of Task Force on Gem & Jewellery, submitted recently contains several useful suggestions and recommendation for the future development of the industry, and action on this report has been initiated.

नागरिकों को उचित दर की दुकानों के माध्यम की सभी आवश्यक वस्तुओं से सप्लाई न किया जाना

498. श्री रामावतार शास्त्री : क्या बाणिज्य तथा नागरिक पुति मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने उचित दर की दुकानों के माध्यम से लोगों को आवश्यक वस्तुएं सप्लाई करने का उत्तरदायित्व लिया है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या यह भी सच है कि नागरिकों को सार्वजनिक प्रणाली के माध्यम से केवल गहं और चीनी सप्लाई की जाती है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो इन दुकानों के माध्यमों से सभी आवश्यक वस्तुओं की सप्लाई न करने के

क्या कारण हैं और कठिनाईयों को दूर करने के लिए सरकार का क्या कार्यवाही करने का विचार है ?

बाणिज्य तथा नागरिक पुति और इस्पात तथा खान मंत्री (श्री प्रणब मुखर्जी) : (क) सरकार ने सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के विभिन्न केन्द्रों के माध्यम से कुछ चुनी आवश्यक वस्तुएं उपलब्ध कराने का उत्तरदायित्व लिया है ।

(ख) जी नहीं, इस समय सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली द्वारा अनाज, चीनी, खाद्य तेलों, साफ्ट कोक और नियंत्रित कपड़े की आपूर्ति की जा रही है । इसके अलावा, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से वितरण के लिए कुछ अन्य चुनी विनिर्मित वस्तुएं जैसे चाय, काफी, विशालियों के लिए काचियां, नहाने का साबुन और दियासलाइयां भी शामिल की गई हैं ।

(ग) सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से वितरण के लिए शामिल की जाने वाली वस्तुओं के बारे में राज्य सरकारों और विभिन्न केन्द्रीय मंत्रालयों के परामर्श से निरन्तर पुनरोक्षा की जा रही है । राज्य सरकारें भी किसी भी ऐसी आवश्यक वस्तु को इसमें शामिल करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं, जिसकी अधिप्राप्ति की व्यवस्था वे स्थानीय रूप में कर सकती हैं ।

Posting of Assistant Directors Abroad

499. SHRI R. P. YADAV: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) is it a fact that a number of officers of his Department are posted abroad regularly;

(b) if so, what is the basis of their posting;

(c) is it also a fact that a panel of Assistant Directors is ready for the last one year to be posted abroad; and

(d) if so, what is the nitch over their posting immediately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The criterion for selection adopted hitherto has been seniority-cum-merit, preference being given to those who have not been posted abroad earlier. This is being review-