

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI MAGANBHAI BAROT) (a) Rs. 60,83,173.

(b) to (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

MMTC holding Stocks of Imported Sulphur

1556. SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation is holding huge stocks of imported sulphur;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to dispose of sulphur?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir. The stocks are barely adequate to meet the indigenous requirements.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Danger to Equipment in Steel Plants

1557. SHRI ARJUN SETHI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the critical position of inputs like coking coal and power has not only paralysed the output but also posed the danger of damage to the equipments in the public Sector Steel Plants;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this crisis might continue in 1980-81; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The critical shortage of coking coal and power has not only affected the production of steel, but has also placed vital equipments in steel plants in a position susceptible to damage.

(b) and (c). There is no improvement in the situation at present. However, with the onset of monsoon and the consequent possible improvement in the hydel generation, the power position is expected to improve in the second half of 1980-81. Various steps are being taken to see that indigenous coking coal supply to the Steel Plants is stepped up. In addition, a proposal to augment indigenous supply by import of high grade low ash Coking Coal from abroad is also under consideration.

Imposition of Higher Duties by U.S. on Imports from India

1558. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. Government has introduced new trade measures to impose higher duties on imports from India;

(b) whether this is likely to affect seriously Indian exports of textiles, iron castings and industrial fasteners like nuts, bolts and screws; and

(c) if so, whether Government have taken up the matter with U.S. Department of Commerce and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The U.S. Government has, after investigations under the Trade Agreements Act 1979, imposed countervailing duties on certain categories of iron

castings and on industrial fasteners imported from India. Similar investigations with respect to textiles have also been initiated.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The matter has been taken up with the U.S. Government and the outcome is awaited.

Scheme for Duty-Free Import of Polyester Fibre against Exports of Synthetic Fabrics

1559. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a scheme for duty free imports of polyester fibre against exports of synthetic fabrics has been okayed by Government;

(b) if so, the details and to what extent the exports of blended fabrics is supposed to be unproved;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is every chance of misusing this scheme by the exporters to make quick profits; and

(d) if so, what measures are taken to check such malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d). The new scheme permitting duty-free imports against Import Replenishment licences announced on 15th April, 1980, does not include polyester fibre. However, exporters requiring to import this item for export production without payment of customs duty can apply for advance import licences under the Duty Exemption Scheme. Imports against advance licences are permitted upto the quantities of raw materials actually required for manufacture of goods to be exported and are subject to an appropriate export obligation. The detailed

policy in this regard is contained in Appendix 19 of Import Policy 1980-81.

Revised Project Report for Visakhapatnam Steel Plant by Soviet Union

1560. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Soviet Union has submitted the revised detailed project report for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant;

(b) if so, the details and Government's decision thereon; and

(c) whether any decision has been taken on the appointment of the prime consultants for the plant?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE & STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir, A revised DPR in respect of the units assigned to the Soviet side has been received by SAIL from them recently.

(b) & (c). The Detailed Project Report for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was prepared initially by M/s Dastur & Co. and submitted in October, 1977. In terms of the protocol signed with the Soviets, it was agreed that the Soviet side would revise the DPR in respect of the main production units, viz., Coke-oven and by Product Plant, Sinter Plant, Blast Furnace Plant, Steel Melt Shop and Rolling Mills. The revision of DPR in respect of the portions remaining outside the scope of work by the Soviets is being done by M/s. Dastur & Co. It is expected that a revised DPR for the entire plant will be ready in about 2 months. After consideration by SAIL, this along with the appointment of prime consultant will be put up to Government for decision.