

than 60 per cent of the reserves can be extracted, open cast method of mining is being introduced, whenever feasible facilitating recovery of 90—95 per cent of the reserves. In the underground mines Longwall method of mining is being gradually introduced which also results in increased recovery.

To meet the shortage of sand for stowing, experiments are being made with crushed stone. This would also ensure higher percentage of coal extraction from underground mines.

#### Shortage of Postal Stamps, Post Cards, Inland Letters and Envelopes in West Bengal

4293. PROF. SATYAGOPAL MISRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that there is an acute shortage of postal stamps, post cards, inland letters and envelopes etc. in different post offices in West Bengal;

(b) what are the reasons; and

(c) the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken to remove the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a to (c). There has been some shortage of postage stamps and postal stationery from time to time, as the production of these items has not always been able to keep pace with the increasing demands.

Several measures taken/proposed to be taken to remove shortage are detailed in the statement laid on the Table of the House. (Placed in Library. See no. LT-2832-A/81).

#### Life of Thermal and Super Thermal Plants

4294. SHRI KALI CHARAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the life of Thermal and Super Thermal Power Stations of all the States and of N.T.P.C.;

(b) what provision has been made for the replacement of these projects every year and what has been the aggregate of this amount upto this day; and

(c) how much derating has been done in these projects upto this day?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN): (a) The accepted life of a Thermal Power Station is 25 years though the life of individual component varies.

(b) There is a provision for depreciation under the Electricity Supply Act where the principles of depreciation have also been elaborated. The ageing of existing units and the need to compensate for the reduced generation from them is taken into account while formulating power plans.

(c) The Central Electricity Authority has accepted deration of 381.7 MW of the installed capacity of thermal power stations in the country.

#### Progress made in setting up Petrochemical complexes Based on Bombay High Gas

4295. SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE ALLURI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state what is the progress made in setting up the petrochemical complexes based on Bombay High gas so far, and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): Preparatory work on the Maharashtra gas cracker project has been taken in hand. Details on the Gujarat gas cracker project are being worked out.

#### Appointment of Producers from Staff Artistes

4296. SHRI RAMAYAN RAI: Will the the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to