

**Issue of Letters of Intent for Manufacture of Sponge Iron**

439. SHRI NAGESHWARA RAO : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state the number of letters of intent issued for the manufacture of sponge iron, based on direct reduction process with iron content ranging between 85-95 per cent, that have materialised, together with particulars thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : Only one letter of intent has been issued in favour of the Industrial Development Corporation of Orissa for the manufacture of 100,000 tonnes of Sponge iron per annum by the direct reduction process. This unit has not come up as yet.

**Remarks attributed to Late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru by an Officer of Israeli Foreign Ministry**

440. SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to an interview of Mr. Gideon Rafael, former Dir. General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel imputing many statements to the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and circulated in India widely ;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to these statements ; and

(c) whether any change in our attitude and relationship with Israel is contemplated ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The records available with the Government of India do not substantiate the statements made by former Director-General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel.

(c) The Government's policy towards the countries of West Asia, based on principles of international conduct and overall considera-

tion of our national interest, is constantly under review. No change is called for.

**Construction of Salem Steel Plant**

441. SHRI K. GOPAL : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the stage at which the construction of Salem Steel Plant stands at present ;

(b) whether acquisition of the steel plant site has been completed by the Government of Tamil Nadu ; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to expedite construction of the Plant ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) : (a) to (c) M/s. M. N. Dastur and Co. (P) Ltd., who were commissioned for the preparation of the Techno-Economic Feasibility Report on the Salem Steel Project, have submitted their report. A decision on the product-mix and technology to be employed would be taken shortly on the basis of which Detailed Project Report and estimates of cost would have to be prepared by the Consultants. Meantime, the following steps have been taken to expedite construction :

(i) *Land Acquisition*

The plant area covering about 2,750 acres has been demarcated on the advice of the Consultants. Out of this, priority has been accorded for the acquisition of about 1,372 acres in the first instance. The Government of Tamilnadu expect to complete acquisition of this area (1,372 acres) before the end of April, 1972.

(ii) *Water Supply*

Proposals have been drawn up for meeting the requirements of water during the construction stage as well as during the operation and maintenance stage of the plant and for the proposed township.

(iii) *Power Supply*

Advance action has been taken in consultation with the State Electricity Board for meeting the requirements of power during