

compiled by the Institute, India ranks 17th amongst the steel producing countries and it has retained this position from 1971-73.

(b) The rate of growth in the Steel sector is very much dependent on the rate of growth in the national economy as a whole. The main reason for not being able to take up the construction of more steel plants is inadequate availability of infrastructure facilities and of financial resources.

(d) In the Fifth Plan period, the capacity of Bokaro Steel Plant is proposed to be expanded to 475 million ingot tonnes and of Bhilai to 4 million ingot tonnes. There will be two major and important expansion of steel capacity. Apart from this, work on the three new steel plants to be set up at Salem, Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagar would be continued.

Sale of Refractories by Bokaro Steel Ltd.

491. SARDAR SWARAN SINGH SOKHI.

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state

(a) whether the Bokaro Steel Ltd is going to sell approximately 5,441 tonnes of refractories of Silica fire Bricks, spoiled by fire and water on the 17th December, 1974;

(b) whether these fire Bricks were burnt or spoiled by fire or water;

(c) the cost price of these imported refractories/Silica fire Bricks, when delivered at site;

(d) whether these Bricks were used in any of the coke ovens or furnaces at Bokaro Steel Plant;

(e) whether these Bricks offered for sale could not be cured and used in the Steel Plant; and

(f) the action Government propose to take if these Silica Bricks were spoiled by fire or water due to the negligence on the part of the officers?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) to (f). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Sino-Indian Relations

492 SHRI MOHINDER SINGH GILI Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether some definite and positive steps have been taken recently to improve our relations with China;

(b) whether appointment of Ambassador to that country at an appropriate time is also under the active consideration of Government; and

(c) whether such chances have now gone remote in the context of better Indo-Sikkim relations?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) As is well-known, over the years India has initiated certain definite and positive steps towards normalising relation with China.

(b) The question of sending an Ambassador to China can be considered at an appropriate time

(c) It is to be regretted that China has not so far responded to India's initiatives towards normalising relations. On the contrary, it has, of late, stepped up its propaganda campaign against India through its uncalled for criticism on the recent developments in Indo-Sikkim relations and other matters.