

Requirement of Ships by Shipping Corporation of India

2523. SHRI V. MAYAVAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the total requirement of ships by the Shipping Corporation of India at present; and

(b) the steps being taken to meet the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI H. M. TRIVEDI):

(a) The Shipping Corporation of India have a proposal to acquire 32 additional ships involving an aggregate of 6.96 lakhs GRT, in the first phase of their fleet expansion scheme during 5th Plan. Presently, the Corporation have a fleet of 112 ships totalling 17.11 lakhs GRT.

(b) Despite severe constraints like sharp escalation in ship prices, difficulties in raising foreign exchange loans, the Shipping Corporation of India are exploring all avenues for acquiring these ships on suitable terms of credit.

Setting up of 1000 mini steel plants

2524. SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether he said that 1000 mini steel plants would be set up and that the target of 120 million tonnes of steel would be achieved by the turn of the century; and

(b) the quantum of sponge iron that is being produced indigenously that will be the most important input for these plants?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) The former Minister of Steel and Mines had expressed a personal view that 1,000 mini steel plants could be set up by the end of this country.

(b) So far, there has been no production of sponge iron on a commercial scale in this country. However, several experiments have been carried out at the National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur and the initial results are encouraging. Seven State Industrial Development Corporations have been granted Letters of Intent for setting up sponge iron units but these schemes are still in the initial stages.

Amendment of Prevention of Food Adulteration Act

2525 SHRI B. K. DASCHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the present prevention of Food Adulteration Act the hand of the law falls on retailers and distributors rather than on manufacturers or producers of adulterated goods;

(b) whether the Act makes any difference between adulterated and sub-standard food;

(c) whether representatives of his Ministry attended a symposium in Delhi on 'Adulteration and its solution'; and

(d) if so, whether he proposes to amend the Act in the light of the discussion and representations made to him?