

resulting in rise in the country's payment to foreign ships at a time when Indian ships are unable to find enough cargo to fill their holds; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and steps proposed to be taken in the matter.

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

(a) There is evidence to indicate that some foreign non-Conference Shipping Lines are operating their vessels in India's overseas trade in which Indian Lines have been operating as members of Conferences and Joint Shipping Services.

(b) Government is considering measures for protecting the interests of Indian Shipping in India's overseas trade.

Central Booking Agency to Replace Freight Brokers

*519. **SHRI Y. ESWARA REDDY:** Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal under consideration to set up a central booking agency for replacing freight brokers; and

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the steps being taken in this regard?

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

(a) and (b). Government are at present studying the present freight arrangements and the possible role that a Central booking agency will have for the maximum utilisation of available shipping space in Indian flag ships for more efficient carriage of India's overseas trade. As the study is in a preliminary stage the question of supplying details does not arise.

Alumina Plant in Serguja

2426. **SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the feasibility report for the establishment of an Alumina Plant, based on the deposits of main-put in Serguja District is ready; and

(b) if so, when is the project likely to be ready?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD):

(a) and (b). Yes, Sir The feasibility report is under examination.

Sale of sub-standard goggles

2427 **SHRI VASANT SATHE:** Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Society for Prevention of Blindness has drawn the attention of Government to the increasing sale of sub-standard goggles; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE): (a) Yes.

(b) The Government are seized of this problem and will examine steps necessary to be taken in this regard.

Assam National Highways

2428. **SHRI NOORUL HUDA:** Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) how many National Highways are there in the State of Assam;

(b) whether the Central Government's attention has been drawn to

the state of disrepair and precarious condition of the Highway connecting Goalpara District of Assam with the State of West Bengal; and

(c) whether adequate measures have been taken to keep and maintain these Highways in good order?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) There are seven National Highways in Assam.

(b) and (c). There are two National Highways viz. 31 and 31B in the Goalpara District of Assam bordering West Bengal. The following steps have been taken to improve the condition of these National Highways:—

- (i) Flood damage repair estimates costing Rs. 43.50 lakhs were sanctioned in 1975 and the work is in full swing.
- (ii) The proposal for the reconstruction of Gangadhar Bridge with guide bund and approaches on National Highway 31 at an estimated cost of Rs. 465.00 lakhs has been agreed to. The estimate for Bridge, Guide Bund and Land Acquisition for approaches at a cost of Rs. 297.755 lakhs has already been sanctioned. The estimate for construction of approaches is under scrutiny and the sanction is expected to be issued shortly.
- (iii) Improvement works costing Rs. 70 lakhs have been sanctioned for National Highways 31 and 31B in Goalpara District and the works are in various stages of construction.
- (iv) In addition to the above improvement works, funds are

also allotted to the State Government each year for normal maintenance and repair, renewal, etc. in accordance with the prescribed norms.

Births after Sterilisation

2429. SHRI N. E. HORO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted any case of births even after sterilization;

(b) if so, the number of such cases, State-wise, during last two years; and

(c) the efforts of Government to rectify the defect in sterilization?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI A. K. M. ISHAQUE): (a) Yes.

(b) One complaint of failure has been received from the Himachal Pradesh during the last two years. However, the reported failure rate based on the basis of some studies is 0.15 per 100 person for male sterilization and in the range of 0.04 to 0.08 for female sterilization.

(c) The following steps have been taken to reduce the incidence of failure after sterilization operation:

- (i) Doctors are trained in the correct procedures of sterilization.
- (ii) Research is going on to develop a better procedure for sterilization, to have nil or minimum failure.
- (iii) The cases are being advised to use Nirodh or some other family planning method upto 3 months after male operations during which time pregnancy is likely to occur