

gramme and reservation of production in Small Industry of certain items. Recently while announcing the liberalisation of industrial licensing policy in regard to diversification of production, 71 items have been excluded from its scope primarily with a view to affording protection to small scale industries.

Expansion of Durgapur Alloy Steel Plant

464. Shrimati Savitri Nigam: Will the Minister of Iron and Steel be pleased to state the final decision taken by Government regarding the expansion of the plant's capacity of Durgapur Alloy Steel Plant from 1 to 3 million tons?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Iron and Steel (Shri P. C. Sethi): It has been decided that the capacity of the Alloy Steel Plant at Durgapur will be increased from 1 million ingot tonnes to 3 million ingot tonnes. A project report for the expansion is being commissioned.

Steel Ingots and Finished Steel

465. Shrimati Savitri Nigam: Will the Minister of Iron and Steel be pleased to state the increase in the production of steel ingots and finished steel during the last one and a half years?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Iron and Steel (Shri P. C. Sethi): The average production per quarter during 1964 and during January 1965 to June, 1966 was as follows:—

	Steel Ingot (Tonnes)	Finished Steel (Tonnes)
Average production per quarter during 1964.	1,508,003	1,085,376
Average production per quarter, from January 1965 to June, 1966.	1,621,129	1,134,956

Hydrochloric Acid for Steel Mills

466. Shri Surendra Pal Singh: Will the Minister of Iron and Steel be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the latest practice all over the world is to use hydrochloric acid for 'pickling' in the manufacture of flats while in the Indian Steel Mills, Sulphuric acid is still being used for that purpose even though this particular commodity has to be entirely procured from abroad at great cost while hydrochloric acid is available indigenously; and

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal under the consideration of Government for a switch-over from sulphuric acid to hydrochloric acid in our Steel Mills?

The Minister of Iron and Steel (Shri T. N. Singh): (a) and (b). The use of hydrochloric acid in place of sulphuric acid for pickling is a recent innovation in the international steel industry. Hydrochloric acid is more corrosive and gives off noxious fumes to a great extent. Its use, therefore, presents complex problems of proper handling, maintenance, fume prevention and neutralisation of effluents; many of these involve human safety. Nevertheless, the Government have asked the steel mills to investigate the feasibility of substituting sulphuric acid by hydrochloric acid in the interests of reducing imports of sulphur.

Closing Down of Unremunerative Railway Lines

467. Shri Surendra Pal Singh: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission had recommended to the Railway Board that certain railway lines in the country which were unremunerative may be closed down;