

(c) No Sir. Asbestos is included in the First Schedule of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and prior approval of Central Government is required before the State Government can grant a prospecting licence or mining lease.

(d) As per information available with Indian Bureau of Mines, as on 25.11.98 a total of 110 mining leases have been granted for asbestos in the country.

(e) The total import of asbestos was 81,924 metric tonnes (MT) valued at Rs. 145 crore in 1995-96 and 77,498 metric tonnes (MT) valued at Rs. 146 crores in 1996-97.

(f) and (g) Production of asbestos during 1995-96 was 23,844 MT, during 1996-97 it was 27,180 MT and during 1997-98 the production was 23,021 MT. Hence it is evident that during 1997-98 production of asbestos has decreased.

Development of Housing Sector in Urban Areas

757. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL : Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any memorandum from Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chambers of Commerce and Industry for development of housing sector in urban areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA) : (a) No such memorandum has been received recently;

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Supply of Wagons for Import of Sugar

758. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the over all position of Railway wagons in terms of present and projected demand of various essential commodities and action plan to meet the same;

(b) whether the Government have received a proposal for supply of more wagons to facilitate import of sugar from Pakistan;

(c) if so, the details of the existing arrangement in this regard and additional wagons sought; and

(d) the details of action taken/proposed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK) :

(a) There is no shortage of Railway Wagons in relation to the present as well as projected demand of various essential commodities. The assessment of wagons is an ongoing process and is done after detailed discussion with all users/ministries. For the Ninth Plan, Indian Railway (IR) plans to procure 1,75,000 Four Wheeler Units (FWUs) to meet a projected demand of 525 MT at the end of the Ninth Plan. During 1997-98, the first year of the Ninth Plan, 27,865 wagons (FWUs) have already been procured for fresh acquisition/replacement of wagons. This includes wagons procured under Own Your Wagon Scheme (OYWS), and Build, Own, Lease, and Transfer (BOLT) schemes.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Wagons required to be loaded with sugar or any other commodity on Pakistan Railway (PR) are supplied by Pakistan Railway and normally these are PR wagons. After unloading in India, PR wagons are sent back either empty or loaded back to Pakistan. Similarly, for loading in our country, Indian Railways wagons are supplied and Pakistan Railway either returns them as empty or loaded with sugar or other commodities.

[Translation]

Cargo Services

759. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
DR. ASHOK PATEL :
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: