

(c) the steps taken by the Government to check such losses ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) RINL has earned cash profits of Rs. 176 crore in 1996-97 and Rs. 15.60 crore in 1997-98. It, however, registered net losses during 1996-97 (Unaudited) 1997-98 (Unaudited & Prov.) to the tune of Rs. 246 crore and Rs. 419 crore, respectively.

(b) Despite cash profits during this period, RINL incurred net losses due to increase in input costs, sluggish market conditions, both in domestic and export markets, coupled with high incidence of capital related charges viz. interest and depreciation.

(c) Measures taken/contemplated to make the company viable are :

- (i) Introduction of appropriate technologies in critical areas to remove production bottlenecks;
- (ii) Improvement of the product mix; and
- (iii) restructuring of the capital base of RINL in order to reduce its interest burden.

[Translation]

Amendments in the Mines and Minerals

255. SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA :

SHRI RAMA NAND SINGH :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received the report of the Committee constituted under the Union Mines Secretary for suggesting amendments in the Mines and Mineral (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957;

(b) if so, whether the report includes the proposed amendment of the Madhya Pradesh Government having provision to charge extra amount on the fixed percentage of the royalty from the mines lease holders for local development ; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The State Government of Madhya Pradesh did make a suggestion in this regard. However, charging extra amount as a fixed percentage on the royalty from the Mining Lease holders for local area development is legally not tenable in the light of several judicial pronouncements.

Drinking Water Problem at Meghnagar Station

256. SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that there is acute scarcity of drinking water for passengers at Meghnagar Railway Station of district Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard ?

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) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

[English]

Development of Multi Barrel System 'Pinaka'

257. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India has developed its own Multi-Barrel Rocket system "PINAKA"

(b) if so, the specification thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be inducted in the Indian Artillery ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNADES) : (a) The indigenously designed Multi-Barrel Rocket System PINAKA is in advanced stage of development.

(b) The system is capable of firing a salvo of 12 rockets upto a maximum range of 39 km in less than 1 minute. The rocket has various types of conventional warheads including sub-munition.

(c) The PINAKA weapon system is planned to be inducted in Indian Army during the IXth Plan period.

Gauge Conversion between Gonda and Bareilly

258. SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Gauge Conversion Work on Gonda-Bareilly line (NER) has already been started; and

(b) if not, the time by which the gauge conversion on above line is likely to be started and completed ?

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) No, Sir.

(b) Of this route, only Gonda-Bahraich is yet included in the budget. The work is to be taken up after obtaining the requisite clearances for which action has been initiated. Rest of the section is not sanctioned for conversion at present.