

route ? It is a new route which they wanted to operate.

**THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA):** Sir, there are eighteen airlines, which have traffic rights at Calcutta. Out of them seven are operating. The reason for not giving the traffic right to SAS to operate from Calcutta to Singapore is that it is not consistent with the agreement that has been arrived at between the two countries. Secondly, if we permit SAS to carry traffic from Calcutta the traffic of Air India will be adversely affected.

**SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHAUDHURY:** Sir, from the answer it becomes clear that in the interest of Air India traffic we are not permitting the foreign airways. It is appreciated. But what is the picture regarding Air India's operation from Calcutta. Sir, the share of the revenue that they earn from Calcutta is 2.3%. Why this is so? They say they are not inspired to operate from Calcutta. The problems they say are Traffic potential maintenance, equipment etc. They also feel that Calcutta has no tourist attraction. Sir, I want that the other airports must be developed but I want to know whether Government will take care to develop Calcutta.

**SHRI A. P. SHARMA:** Sir, as a matter of fact Calcutta is one of our biggest airports. Over and above that measures have been taken to develop Calcutta further for increasing traffic. So far as Air India traffic from Calcutta is concerned the traffic is not as adequate as would enable it to operate from Calcutta and, therefore, whatever traffic Air India can have from Calcutta that is being carried from other airports.

**SHRI SONGOSH MOHAN DEV:** Sir, Calcutta was one of the most important airports but in view of the fact that there are too many strikes and

bandhs in Calcutta and West Bengal the international passengers suffer and, Sir, many of these strikes and bandhs are Government-sponsored. May I know from the Hon. Minister whether before they start an international airlines from Calcutta they will make sure that the West Bengal Government does not sponsor bandhs ?

**SHRI A. P. SHARMA:** Sir, there, is no doubt that Calcutta is a very important airport so far as we are concerned but, Sir, there have been some trouble at times. But, Sir, the discontinuance of a service from Calcutta cannot be done only on that ground. As I have said earlier the traffic position of Calcutta is such that Air India is not operating at the moment. We will be surveying whether the traffic position is such that Air India should operate. At present the traffic that goes from Calcutta to other places is being carried from other airports.

#### **Coking Coal Crisis in Steel Plants due to Non-availability of Railway Wagons**

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**SHRI R. P. DAS:**

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

(a) whether it is a fact that due to non-availability of requisite railway wagons, the steel plants are facing coking coal crisis most of the time ;

(b) If so, whether the Steel Ministry have pursued the matter properly with the Railway Ministry ;

(c) if so, the result thereof ; and

(d) steps taken by Government to avert such coking coal crisis in future ?

**THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) :** (a) to (d). It is correct that stocks of coking coal in steel plants have been lower than the prescribed levels for the last few months. This has been due to higher rate of consumption which has not been fully matched by increased supplies. Steps to improve the situation have been taken in consultation with the Railway Board and the Department of Coal. Some improvement in the position has taken place and efforts in this direction will be continued.

**SHRI R. P. DAS:** In view of the Hon. Minister's reply, I would like to know whether the non-availability of the railway wagons would be a contributing factor to stall the normal functioning of the coke oven batteries in the public sector plants in a planned economy. I would also like to know the present position of stock fall the six integrated steel plants, plant-wise.

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** It is not a question that because of certain infra structural constraints, coke oven batteries are starved and production has gone down. The Hon. Member may be aware of it. I would like to share this information with the House. Steel production is increasing ; it is not decreasing. As far as production of saleable steel is concerned it has gone up by nearly 20 percent. Production of ingots increased by 17 percent. That is why in the main answer I have also pointed out that we are consuming more. Of course there are some constraints. On an average there should be a stock of 350,000 tonnes. What happened is that that stock has gone down. I don't have the figures plant-wise. But I may point out that the stock position of coking coal as of yesterday, (that is, 17th December) was 2,25,400 tonnes.

**SHRI R. P. DAS:** It is a very dangerously low level of stocks which the steel plants are having as against their normal requirement of 5 lakhs tonnes. I would like to know whether the Minister is aware that total finished saleable steel in all 6 public sector steel plants have gone up to 7.1 lakh tonnes in early October as against 5.7 lakh tonnes as on 1st April, 1981. Sir, the Rourkela steel plant is the worst sufferer, in this respect. It was holding as much as 94,000 tonnes of saleable steel in last October. Durgapur was holding 54,000 tonnes. What has been done in this respect by the Government ? Would it not help in increasing the prices in the market ?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** I am afraid the Hon. Member is not aware of the market position. Last year steel price has gone down by Rs. 150 to Rs. 160 per tonne. Except for pig iron, in respect of all other steel items, prices are going down. If the conclusion of the Hon. Member is that stocks in the individual plants have increased, to some extent, they have increased because if production goes up naturally stocks are also getting building up to some extent. Over and above that due to non availability of the railway wagons for outward movement, there has been some accumulation and these things are being set right. But I may say that the coal position obviously is not at a 'Dangerously low level' as the Hon. Member has described it.

**SHRI KAMAL NATH:** The Hon. Minister told us that steel production has increased. Sir, uptill now, steel production plants had a power shortage. We had seen a situation when steel plants did not have power; power plants did not have coal ; steel plants did not have wagons ; and the wagon industry did not have sufficient orders. I want to know as to what is the loss of production which has been caused due to low level of coal availability. My friend has stated

that the coal availability is 'at a dangerously low level'. Because of that how much loss has taken place ?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** Sir, it is not less production. I would put it in this way. The target which you wanted to reach you may not be in a position to reach. As the Member is aware, last year, production in various steel plants was 4.7 million tonnes. This year, at the initial stage, steel plants fixed a target at 7.5 million tonnes. Subsequently, at the direction of the Finance Minister and when we had a meeting with the Board of Public Enterprise, we fixed a revised target of 6.3 million tonnes. For the production of saleable steel if we wanted to produce 5.7 million tonnes, the total requirement of coking coal from indigenous supplies would have been 13.60 million tonnes for the steel plants and 2.90 million tonnes for the TISCO. That means it would have been 16 million tonnes. So, I would put it this way. The ratio is known to the Hon. Member. For production of one tonne of hot metal, we require 1.53 tonnes of coking coal so far as the sophisticated plants like Bokaro is concerned and 1.9 tonnes are required so far as TISCO is concerned. Therefore, I would say that the net production has not gone down. But the upward target which we have fixed may not be reached if we do not get coal sufficiently. So far as the availability of the wagons for coal supplies is concerned, their requirement is roughly about 3300 four wheelers a day and at present we are getting 3100 wagons. But we are trying to improve the supply.

**SHRI A. K. ROY:** Coal, steel and rail transport form three sides of the triangle leading us to confusion and in regard to the supply of coking coal, they have got enough of coking coal and the stock is very high. In answer to unstarred Question No. 3227, the Railway Minister said on 10-12-1981 that in 1981, the demand of the collieries was 11,000 wagons and odd

per day and that was 10% to 12% high and they had supplied only 10,000 wagons per day. That means there was no dearth of supply of wagons to them. That is why this position arises because of the non-availability of the coking coal, non-availability of the wagons and also lack of planning of the steel industries in giving proper indents in time. I would like to know what was the indent the steel industries gave this year and the availability of the wagon or is it because of the Ministries who are denying their responsibility ?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** Nobody is denying the responsibility. In fact the Cabinet Committee under the Chairmanship of the Finance Minister, known as Cabinet Committee on Industrial Infrastructure of which I am also a Member, the Energy Minister and the Railway Minister are also Members, is constantly reviewing this matter. The Hon. Member himself has quoted the figures and he says that the shortage was there. The requirement was 11,000 and odd and the supply was 10,000 wagons. He has himself pointed out this. What I pointed out in reply to the earlier question is that supply and requirement depend on the production target. For the production of 5.7 million tonnes, I indicated that the requirement would be 16 million tonnes. But we revised the production target upward and naturally more requirement would be there and that is why I have given the figure that for the production of one tonne of hot metal, the requirement of coking coal would be 1.53 tonnes so far as Bokaro is concerned which is a good plant and 1.9 tonnes would be required so far as TISCO is concerned.

**SHRI A. K. ROY:** My point was regarding the indent and supply. What was the indent you got ?

**MR. SPEAKER:** That is all right. Next question, Shri Bheekhabhai.