

Ash Content in Coking Coal

*283. SHRI NIREN GHOSH:
Will the Minister of STEEL AND
MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of ash content in the coking coal supplied to the SAIL;

(b) steps taken to reduce the ash content in the coking coal;

(c) whether he is aware that every percentage increase in the ash content of coking coal decreases the productivity of the blast furnaces by as much as 3.5 per cent and it also increases the coke consumption rate by as much as 3 per cent; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The percentage of ash in prime and medium coking coal supplied to the SAIL steel plants by the washeries during 1980-81 has been in the range of 20—23.8 per cent and 18.5—21.9 per cent respectively.

(b) and (d). Among the steps taken to reduce the ash-content in coking coal, mention may be made of the following:—

(i) Improving the quality of raw coal fed into the washeries;

(ii) A fine coal washery section is being commissioned at Dugda I & II washeries in order to beneficiate—6 mm fraction coal;

(iii) A froth floatation section is also being added at Dugda II washery to beneficiate extremely fine coal;

(iv) Import of low ash coking coal to be used in suitable blend with indigenous coal (this has so far been possible only at Bhilai and Rourkela Steel Plant); and

(v) With the commissioning of Sundamdih and Monidih washeries, it is expected that there would be some improvement in the quality of coking coal.

(c) Yes, Sir.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Where is the statement?

MR. SPEAKER: Did you not get the statement?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: If I knew, I could have got one copy for him.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA: A copy should be furnished to him.

MR. SPEAKER: I think he will match him in height. That is why he has more affinity with him.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are of the same height and there is fraternity!

MR. SPEAKER: It looks like that. Something it is a sort of fraternity.

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA: Whether on the same wave-length?

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sir, Every percentage increase in the ash content of the coking coal decreases the productivity of the blast furnace by as much as 3.5 per cent. It also increases the coke consumption rate by as much as 3 per cent. Now it is reported that the Steel Department requires an amount of 94,15,000 tonnes of 19 per cent ash content. But they have got commitment of 87,40,000 fine quality coal with 21 per cent ash content. How much has this effected the production already and will still affect production? How does the Ministry propose to make up

the loss? Is there anything? Or are our coal washeries incompetent to supply such sort of coal? In view of all this what do you propose to do?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: So far as the factual part of the question is concerned, the hon. Member has himself pointed out 1 per cent increase in ash content means additional requirement of 3 per cent of coking coal and it reduces the blast furnace capacity by 3.5 per cent.

In regard to the requirement of coal if the ash content remains constant and if we have coking coal with 19 per cent ash content, for the production figure originally decided—about 7.2 million tonnes ingot steel, 5.7 million tonnes saleable steel, 1.4 million tonnes pig iron—the requirement would be 13.5 million tonnes of coking coal for SAIL's steel plants. But, subsequently, in consultation with the Bureau of Public Enterprises, in a meeting taken by the Finance Minister, we have decided to increase the production of ingot, saleable steel and pig iron. Ingot would be roughly about 8 million, saleable steel would be 6.3 million and pig iron would be 1.5 million tonnes. Naturally the availability of the coking coal will have to be increased. We have already taken it up with the Department of Coal. Two aspects are to be taken into consideration—reducing ash content and having more and more washeries. Washeries have the capacity. But gradually when we are going down in the mine, the quality of the raw material, raw coal is also going down. So, we require more washing. When we require more washing, the net output and total quantity will be less. But with the commissioning of Sudamdih and Monidih washeries and with certain addition of capacity in the existing washeries, the situation will improve.

In regard to the import of coking coal, the hon. Member is aware that we import coking coal. But in addition to that he wanted to know whe-

ther we are importing steel. Yes, we are importing some quantity of steel. It is roughly 1.6 million tonnes.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: If we import coking coal of low ash content of fine quality, I cannot understand why the production has fallen at all. They can blend it or they can use it. It is less costly. But the import of 1.6 million tonnes of steel, if it is a sort of buffer stock, I do not know, has led to a prodigious amount of mal-practice. In view of those things, we assume that steel should not be imported, rather the coking coal amount should be increased so that the requisite amount of the targetted production can be reached. If not, why not?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The whole problem is that we cannot have any blanket type of solution, as the hon. Member is suggesting. If we are to import coking coal also, we shall have to take into account the capacities of the ports to handle, to what extent they can handle, and the capacities of the railways to take it from the ports to different steel plants. Therefore, all these factors will have to be taken into account. The necessity of importing steel comes in because the total requirement, as projected, would be roughly about 10.5 million tonnes and the production from the integrated steel plants, from the mini steel plants, all taken together, would be roughly about 8.9 million tonnes. So, there is a gap. However, we have decided that with the higher rate of production target which we have fixed, if we can achieve that, correspondingly, our dependence on imports would be reduced. We are making that exercise.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: In reply to the Question, in point (iv) of the statement, it is stated:

“Import of low ash coking coal to be used in suitable blend with

indigenous coal (this has so far been possible only at Bhilai and Rourkela Steel Plants);”

I would like to know what kind of coal is being supplied to Durgapur Steel Plant and whether the blending of imported coal is to be extended for supply to the Durgapur Steel Plant as well.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:

The supply of imported coking coal to the Durgapur Steel Plant is just not possible at this stage. As the hon. Member is aware, though we have taken a decision to import about 2.2 million tonnes, still upto now, we have placed contracts for 0.6 million tonnes. Unfortunately, the price of coking coal in the international market is also increasing substantially. Therefore, whatever coal we are getting, we are trying to make the optimum use of it. Naturally, as the hon. Member is fully aware, the performance of the Bhilai Steel Plant is the best of all the integrated steel plants and the next is Rourkela. So, let us try to see that those steel plants which are doing better do not deteriorate.

MR. SPEAKER: Next Question.

श्री राम किकर : प्रश्न संख्या 284।

श्री कृष्ण कुमार गोयल : प्रश्न संख्या

301 को भी इसके साथ ले लिया जाए।

Both are of the same nature, in the interest of the poppy growers.

बाराबंकी जिले (उत्तर प्रदेश) में पोस्त की खेती के लिए लाइसेंस

* 284. श्री राम किकर : क्या वित्त

मंत्री निम्नलिखित जानकारी दर्शाने वाला विवरण सभा पटल पर रखने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) बाराबंकी जिले (उत्तर प्रदेश) के कितने किसानों को 1970-71 से 1979-80 तक (वर्षवार) पोस्त पौधे की खेती के लिए लाइसेंस दिए गए और कितने क्षेत्र में इसकी खेती की अनुमति दी गई थी ;

(ख) प्रतिवर्ष किसानों की संख्या और खेती का क्षेत्र कम किए जाने के क्या कारण हैं ;

(ग) क्या बाराबंकी जिले में पोस्त के पौधे की खेती के अन्तर्गत आने वाला क्षेत्र कम कर दिया गया है जब कि दूसरे जिलों में इसका क्षेत्र बढ़ा दिया गया है ;

(घ) क्या हजारों किसान पोस्त लाइसेंस के लिए आवेदन करते हैं और यदि हां, तो ये लाइसेंस प्रदान करने में क्या कठिनाइयां हैं ;

(ङ) क्या गत 2-3 वर्षों के दौरान ओला वृष्टि और भारी वर्षा से पोस्त की फसल को भारी हानि हुई थी, और क्या सम्बद्ध अधिकारियों ने उसका मूल्यांकन विलम्ब से किया था ; और

(च) क्या हानि से सम्बन्धित राजस्व विभाग की रिपोर्ट भी अस्वीकृत कर दी गई थी और यदि हां, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA):
(a) to f). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.