

With regard to part (c) of the question, till we came to this House there was no report from the State Government with regard to the demands that have been put forward by the organisation. Just now we have received this telex message and we will examine it.

SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN : The figure of the arrested persons it appears is very much less as compared to the persons actually arrested .....

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : They can only get information from the State Government.

SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN : Anyhow, it is stated that the report from the State Government is awaited. Already one and a half month is over but still the reports have not come. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what steps is the Government intending to take?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P.C. SETHI) : As far as the number of arrested persons is concerned, the figure of 32,735 persons has been given by the State Government which is also confirmed by our reports. We have only said that with regard to the demands made by the organisation, the State Government has not forwarded the information but as far as our information from our sources is concerned, there are seven demands (i) No arrests without warrants, (ii) The Satyagrahis not to be fired upon; (iii) No attachment of farmers property and restoration of property already seized. (iv) Formation of industrial and agricultural price commission for the State, (v) Judicial enquiry into police atrocities on farmers in Chikmagalur and Tumkur districts and suspension of the officers responsible for the same; (vi) Scrapping of Land Fragmentation Act, and (vii) The Chief Minister should publicly apologise to the farmers for the inconvenience caused to them.

SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN : Has it come to the notice of the Government that the Janata Government, inspite of the fact that the 20-Point Programme has given very much scope for the agriculture and the ryots and in spite of the fact that it is an official

programme, is trying to see that the programme is sabotaged, and if so, what action does the Government intend to take?

MR. SPEAKER : No.

### Prices of Steel

\*144. SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYYA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government intend to increase the prices of steel further;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps Government have taken so that profit may arise by way of keeping costs low, by way of speeding up the operation cycle, by way of raising productivity and by improving the turn-over capital-ratio ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI N.K.P. SALVE) : (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

### Statement

(a) and (b) The Joint Plant Committee from time to time fixes and announces the prices of common categories of steel products of main producers taking into account the cost of production, demand and supply and related factors including the impact of prices of steel on the development programme.

(c) The major steps taken to improve financial viability are as follows :

(i) Substitution of imports by diversification of the product-mix to better match demand and generation of surpluses for export : thus imports by SAIL in 1983-84 are likely to be 0.55 million tonnes valued at about Rs. 280 crores compared to imports of 1.32 million tonnes in 1982-83 valued at Rs. 501 crores.

(ii) Reduction in stocks of steel by

adopting an aggressive sales strategy; stocks that were 1.45 million tonnes on 1.4.1983 declined to 0.9 million tonnes on 1.3.1984 so that the decline in working capital requirement has been approximately Rs. 180 crores.

- (iii) Plant level cost control committees have been set up to meet regularly and achieve reduction in costs.
- (iv) Strict control on inventories of raw materials, stores, spares etc. : a

saving of about Rs. 19 crores has been achieved in the period April '83 and January '84.

- (v) Close association of research and development scientists to effect economies and to assist in the development of products in short supply and with improved quality; thus in 1983-84 substantial increases in production are likely to be achieved in certain categories as can be seen from the following table :

Item	(Quantity in tonnes)	
	Production during 1982-83	Likely production in 1983-84
L.P.G. Sheets	17,744	62,500
DD/EDD Sheets	6,409	18,000
Boiler quality Plates	6,730	14,000
IS-2062 Plates	44,240	54,000
Shipbuilding quality plates	24,638	25,000
GP/GC Sheets (0.4 0.5 mm)	16,613	29,000
Electrode quality wire rods	10,353	22,000
90 U.T.S. Rails	—	2,500

In addition the SAIL Plants have developed Corten Steel and Margin Steel Plates.

- (vi) Optimisation of captive power generation.
- (vii) Special efforts to adhere to technological regimes in process and equipment operation and to techno-economic norms of efficiency despite deterioration in the quality of raw materials.
- (viii) Creation of awareness of the need for improving productivity by inter-action between all categories of personnel employed through seminars, workshops etc.
- (ix) Regular discussion on how to improve productivity with trade

unions at plant level and corporate level; and

- (x) Production of demand oriented saleable steel to cater effectively to market needs.

**SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYYA :**  
The steel industry world over is facing crisis. The western countries which are suffering from steel slump succeeded in getting India to import their unwanted steel. Though the Hon. Minister in his reply has said that there will be less imports of steel this year, but the fact is that we are importing steel when our country is reeling under a huge glut. In such a situation the increase in steel price will not help the public sector steel plants becoming viable. So, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the steel price was raised three times during the last two years and

whether the President of the All India Manufacturers' Organisation has appealed to the Government to reduce the price of steel ?

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE : So far as the first aspect of the question is concerned, the Hon. Member is making an allegation that the foreign countries are dumping their steel on us at a cheap price and to compete with them, we are increasing the prices. It is factually incorrect. Our imports through SAIL have substantially gone down. In 1981-82 in terms of thousand metric tonnes, the imports were to the extent of 1,048.2, in 1982-83 these were 1,317.2 and in 1983-84 these have been only 486.6 up to January 84. We want to curtail them further. So, the question of augmenting the internal price to meet the reduced dumping price of the imported steel is incorrect. It is also true that the price of steel was increased in 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84. There is a mechanism in terms of which it is the Joint Plant Committee which fixes the price from time to time, keeping in view several aspects, *inter alia* the cost of production, contribution to the JPC, what the market can bear etc. More than anything else, we have to bear in mind the fact that any increase in steel prices immediately affects the development plan. Therefore, all these aspects are looked into by the Joint Plant Committee when they increase the prices.

SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYYA : I would like to know whether the revenue loss of the steel plants will be met by increasing their efficiency, rather than increasing the price of steel ?

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE : It is a very hypothetical question whether the revenue loss is to be met by increasing the price of steel or otherwise. Unless we know what are the prices fixed by the JPC and unless we know what is the increased cost of production, we cannot say anything. The statement laid on the Table of the House enumerates as many as 10 steps which we have taken, major steps, to improve the financial viability and the financial performance of the plant.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I

would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether it is a fact that, on the last occasion, when the price of steel was increased on the eve of the declaration of the increase in price, because the news about the likely increase in price of steel had leaked out, some agency made a massive purchase of steel. How much was the loss that was incurred in these purchases? Will you investigate as to who were responsible for the entire affair ?

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE : Though it appeared in the press that the steel prices are going to increase, the fact is that they did not increase. This is not the first time when what has appeared in the paper has not come true.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : You have made the statement:

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE : I have never made such a statement. In fact, I made a categorical statement to the contrary, which Shri Indrajit Gupta did not read. I have never said that the price will increase. In the meeting of the Re-rollers' Association when they were asking for a reduction of price, I said that I cannot reduce these prices because I am sustaining a loss. As a result of that, the papers drew the inference that the prices are going to increase. As to the last part of the question, I do not know anything about any party making large purchases. At any rate, the prices have not increased. So, what is it that we have to enquire into ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, he is not replying to my question correctly. I seek your protection. The second part of the question was about the prices increase. On the eve of the increase in prices, what were the massive purchases that were made by some parties? Will he lay on the Table of the House a statement of these purchases—the quantum of purchases and the losses incurred ?

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE : The prices were increased in 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, and 1983-84. Which one does he refer to? Who has purchased and who has kept them? It is a very unfair question to ask me.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, it is unfair to put that interpretation. He has already admitted that three times the prices were raised. I am referring to the first time when the prices were raised.

MR. SPEAKER : Next question. Shri Qadri.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, you are not giving me protection.

MR. SPEAKER : I have given it so long.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Can I catch your eyes ?

MR. SPEAKER : Not only the eyes, I have given you the ears also.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I am prepared to catch your ears also; I do not mind it.

MR. SPEAKER : You have already done it.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : It is very unfair that he has not answered my question. He has himself admitted the price increased. I was very specific; I was referring to the first time, out of the three, when the prices were increased.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think you have put a specific question.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : If he is not ready with the answer, he can lay it on the Table.

MR. SPEAKER : You give the specific date and he will tell you.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : 1980-81.

MR. SPEAKER : By whom ?

SHRI N.K.P. SALVE : In 1980-81 the prices were raised three times. Which one does he refer to ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The

first one; I am very specific, because I know the instance. I do not want to answer, because you are the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER : You can put a separate question; not like this.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I have already put the supplementary. It is a specific question. I have told him just now that it relates to 1980-81.

MR. SPEAKER : Not like this, Professor.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : He is trying to avoid a reply.

MR. SPEAKER : He can give another notice.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, there are a lot of skeletons in the cupboard, I tell you.

MR. SPEAKER : There might be skeletons, I don't know.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : But the skeletons should be laid on the table of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : But he cannot uncover all of them. There may be rods, iron rods.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : What is your direction, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER : You can give me another question for specific answer.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I have already put the question. Let him lay it on the Table of the House next time.

MR. SPEAKER : He can give you the information.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, I have not asked for the information privately. It is about a public sector organisation.

PROF. N. G. RANGA : When the

Information is given to you, is it not a public information? It is a public information.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** Therefore, it should be laid on the Table of the House. I don't want him to write me a letter, Sir. I want the House to know. This is not a private affair. It is a public affair.

**PROF. N. G. RANGA :** When he gives it to you, it is a public reply.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** It is not a public reply. Sir, let it be clear. The reply sent by the Minister to the Member is not a public document. I want that reply to be laid on the table of the House.

**MR. SPEAKER :** You can put another question. I will allow that.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** I have raised the question and he should lay it on the table of the House.

**SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR :** Today the Minister's batting is very weak, Sir.

**MR. SPEAKER :** No, he is a good batsman.

**SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR :** No, Sir.

**SHRI S.T. QUADRI :** Sir, the Minister has mentioned about initiating various measures on reduction of costs, cost reduction of the plant, better utilisation of capacity so that the cost of production will go down in the plants. But the main question pertains to whether the Government is thinking to increase the price or not. There is no categorical answer from the Hon. Minister on this issue. One area where the Hon. Minister has to bestow his attention is the capacity utilisation in the plant so that the costs are further reduced and there is no necessity for the Government to increase the prices. Will the Minister reply to this part, please?

**SHRI N.K.P. SALVE :** Sir, I have given a categorical answer that so far as the

increase in prices is concerned, that is the task which has been entrusted to the Joint Plant Committee excepting for some minor items like tin plates, pipes, scraps, alloy steel and the Government does not interfere in it. So far as the optimum utilisation of the capacity of the Plant is concerned, maximum effort is being made. Not merely that, we are also trying to have a product-mix, which will be demand oriented in the case of saleable steel and which will cater effectively to market needs. So, not merely do we want to augment the capacity to the maximum, but also produce goods which will be demand-oriented.

#### Sophisticated Weapons Stolen from Gun Houses

\*146. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA :

SHRI M. RAMGOPAL REDDY :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether eight sophisticated weapons were stolen from a gun house on Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi;

(b) whether in the past sophisticated weapons were also stolen from gun houses and police stations in various parts of the country;

(c) whether these stolen weapons reach gun totting criminals;

(d) whether any of the stolen weapons have since been recovered and the thieves identified;

(e) if so, the particulars thereof; and

(f) the security measures proposed to be taken in gun houses to avoid such theft?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. VENKATASUBBAIAH) :** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the year 1983, two such