

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** So far as this item is concerned, it is the administrative Ministry, viz. the Ministry of Agriculture which thought that we should not export it, as a result of which we have put a ban. But we are taking it up with them, i.e. to enquire whether they are in a position to supply them. Sometimes it happens that in order to meet the domestic demand, we put a ban on export.

### Setting up of Integrated Port Based Steel Plant

\*191. **SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to set up an integrated port-based steel plant in the country other than at Paradeep; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

**THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):** (a) and (b). With a view to augmenting the steel making capacity in the country, Government have been exploring the possibilities of setting up a new port-based steel plant with technical and financial assistance from some of the developed countries. As a result, concrete proposals have been received from certain parties in West Germany, U.K. etc. These proposals including the question of final location as well as other terms and conditions are presently in various stages of detailed technical and financial evaluation and will have to be negotiated further with the parties concerned before a final decision can be taken.

**SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK:** Is it a fact that West Germany and U.K. firms have offered to set up a steel plant at Paradeep on turn-key basis?

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** It is more or less on the turn-key basis.

but we are not using that term. But all the formalities are not to be complied with, but substantially it is on the turn-key basis.

**SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI:** The people of Orissa were very glad when the hon. Minister had been recently on tour to Orissa and categorically assured that there would be a shore-bound Steel Plant at Paradeep. It had already come out in the papers that West Germany and other countries sent their team to India, they also visited Paradeep and almost selected the site and that land has already been allotted, so far as this is concerned. I would like to know by what time all the decisions are going to be taken, say, within two months or three months to set up the steel plant at Paradeep.

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** We are trying to expedite the matter and it is known to the hon. member that it is a project of more than Rs. 1500 crores. I have already explained that it will be financed 100 per cent by the foreign parties including on-shore parties. In view of that, it is taking some time, but we are in the process of negotiations with both the parties. We are trying to evaluate which will be more favourable to us; and after arriving at a decision, we will take the final decision.

### Foreign Exchange Reserves

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193. **SHRI P. J. KURIEN:**

**SHRI P. K. KODIYAN:**

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foreign exchange reserves have been steadily declining for the last one year;

(b) if so, the facts and reasons therefor; and

(c) what measures have been taken by Government to boost exports, particularly to Gulf and African countries?