

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether there is a scarcity of gypsum at present?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) to (c). Essentially, gypsum mined by F.C.I. is used as a raw material for production of ammonium sulphate at its Sindri Unit and Off-quality are, thrown up during mining and not suitable for fertilizer production is available for other applications.

Apart from some gypsum sold in 1969-70 to the State Government of Haryana for promotional purposes in run-of-mine (unbagged and in lump) condition in 1969-70, there were no regular commercial sales of gypsum for agricultural purposes till the end of 1972-73. In 1973-74, however the Corporation effected sales of gypsum to the Marketing Federation of Punjab and Haryana at the rates indicated below:—

- (i) Gypsum of 60 mesh and packed in polythene lined second-hand gunny bags of 50 Kg. capacity ex-Suratgarh station—Rs. 115 per tonne.
- (ii) Gypsum powder of 60 mesh and packed in polythene lined new bags of 50 Kg. capacity ex-Suratgarh station—Rs. 126 per tonne.

The above rates are inclusive of railway freight.

Since the sale of production this form has been effected by the Corporation for the first time, the question of any price increase does not really arise.

No reports of gypsum scarcity have come to the notice of the Government.

पटना और पहलेजाघाट के बीच चलनेवाले पुराने रेलवे स्टीमरों को बदलना

*336. श्री शंकर बरवाल सिंह : क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या पटना और पहलेजाघाटों के बीच गंगा नदी में चलने वाले रेलवे स्टीमर बहुत पुराने हो गये हैं और विगत एक वर्ष के दौरान उसमें कई बार खराबी आने के कारण यात्रियों को मज्जघार में ही रुके रहना पड़ा ;

(ख) क्या सरकार का विचार पुराने स्टीमर को नये स्टीमर में बदलने का है, और यदि हां, तो कब; और

(ग) गत एक वर्ष के दौरान उक्त स्टीमर सेवा से रेलवे को कितना लाभ अथवा हानि हुई ?

रेल मंत्री (श्री एल० एन० मिश्र) ।

(क) से (ग). विभिन्न स्थानों पर स्टीमर सेवा के सम्पूर्ण प्रश्न पर विचार किया जा रहा है ।

Import of Procaine Hydro-chloride by I.D.P.L.

*337. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Messrs. Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. have been allowed to import Procaine Hydrochloride during 1971-72 and 1972-73 and if so, the quantity imported;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange involved by way of imports; and

(c) whether indigenous manufacturers were contacted each time before permitting import and with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) to (c). No import licence for import of Procaine Hydro-chloride was issued to M/s. Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, during 1971-72

and 1972-73. However, a quantity of 24.7 tonnes of Procaine Hydro-chloride was imported by them during the period 1971-72 against the licence issued for licensing period 1970-71. An amount of Rs. 7.42 lakhs in foreign exchange was involved by way of imports. The item is on the 'Restricted List' under the Import Policy, that is, licences were issued on restricted basis, keeping in view the indigenous availability, on the recommendations of the DGTD. Further, the application for licence was made by M/s. I.D.P.L. after making an assessment of the indigenous availability of Procaine Hal.

Setting up of a High Powered National Energy Commission to draw up an Emergency Plan for Power

*338. SHRI N. K. SANGHI: Will the Minister of IRRIGATION AND POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to set up a high-powered National Energy Commission, instead of the proposed 'Energy Board', and also to draw up an emergency plan for the next two years; and

(b) whether Government have also considered the feasibility of importing gas turbines to meet the power needs in the industrial belts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI K. C. PANT):

(a) No, Sir. However, steps to maximise generation of power are being taken.

(b) The feasibility of importing gas turbines to meet power needs of the industrial belts as such has not been considered. However, a proposal to instal gas turbines in Bokaro Steel Plant and Bhilai Steel Plant as captive plants for meeting their urgent power requirements is under examination.

Directive to State Governments to curb Petrol consumption

*340. SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have asked the State Governments to cut down the Petrol consumption; and

(b) if so, the reaction of State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI D. K. BOROOAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) State Governments will no doubt take steps accordingly.

Conversion of Tiruchirapalli-Tuticorin-Tirunelveli Metre Gauge line into Broad Gauge

†341. SHRI M. K. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for the conversion of Tiruchirapalli-Tuticorin-Tirunelveli line of Southern Railway from metre gauge to broad gauge; and

(b) the broad outlines of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI L. N. MISHRA): (a) and (b). A proposal to convert the Madras-Tiruchirapalli - Madurai-Tuticorin metre gauge section into broad gauge was considered but not taken up. A survey has, however, been carried out for conversion of the section from Madurai to Tuticorin/Tirunelveli together with the proposal for linking Karur to Madurai by B.G. The report is under examination.