

(a) the reasons that the prices of foodgrains, oil and other edibles remain more than the prices fixed by Government; and

(b) the steps, if any, being taken or are likely to be taken to see that the shopkeepers do not charge more than the reasonable margin of profit on such commodities?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P. SHINDE):** (a). Prices of foodgrains, oil and other edibles are not fixed by the Government except in case of Vanaspathi and or rice in two or three States.

(b) Government are keeping a constant watch on the prices. In case of commodities like foodgrains, sugar, vanaspathi etc., action is taken to arrange for additional supplies through public/open market channels in order to control prices. The State Government will also utilise the powers available to them under the Essential Commodities Act to check undue profiteering by traders in respect of essential commodities.

**Steel for Travancore Titanium Factory,  
Kerala**

**\*265. SHRI A. K. GOPALAN:** Will the Minister of STEEL & MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to supply necessary quantity of Steel for the expansion of Travancore Titanium Factory in Kerala; and

(b) If so, what quantity?

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL & MINES: (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM)** (a) and (b). In February, 1971 a request was received from the Kerala Government for allotment of about 1,800 tonnes of various categories of steel for expansion of the Travancore Titanium Factory, Kerala. The procedure for obtaining

priority for supply of this steel was explained to the State Government. As and when the priority Requisitions are received, they will be given full consideration by the Steel Priority committee in the context of the availability and the total demands from all priority sectors.

**Visit by the Ispat aur Khan Mantri to  
Durgapur Steel Plant.**

**\*266. SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURY:** Will the Minister of STEEL & MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Durgapur and inspected the Durgapur Steel Plant factories on the 8th and 9th of May, 1971 and also held discussions with the management and Labour Union representatives about raising the level of steel production in Durgapur Steel Plant, and

(b) the specific new measures initiated since then on the basis of these discussions for improving production and utilising the productive capacity of the Plant in full?

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM):** (a) Yes, Sir. During my visit to Durgapur Steel Plant on 8th May, 1971, I had discussions with the management and Labour union representatives on measures to raise the production of Steel in that plant.

(b) The need for concentrating attention on increasing production, on preventive maintenance and creating a congenial atmosphere for work by co-operative effort was recognised during the discussions held with the employees and it is hoped that better results may now be expected.

**Central Assistance for Famine Areas  
and Scarcity areas of Bihar**

**\*267. SHRI H.M. PATEL:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bihar have declared 11 blocks as "famine areas" and

43 blocks as "scarcity areas" in Patna, Gny, Monghyr, Champaran and Darbhanga Districts, and

(b) if so, whether the Central Government have given any assistance to the Government of Bihar to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ANNASAHAB P SHINDE) (a) The Government of Bihar has declared 20 blocks as "famine affected areas" and 103 blocks as "scarcity affected areas" in the districts of Patna, Gaya, Monghyr, Champaran, Darbhanga, Hrazibagh, Saharsa, Muzaffarpur, Dhanbad, Santhal Parganas, Shahabad and Bhagalpur

(b) The State Government has requested the Central Government for an ad-hoc financial assistance of Rs 3 crores. A Central Study Team is visiting the State for an on-the-spot assessment. The quantum of assistance, if any, will be decided on receipt of the Team's report.

#### Commissioning of a second mine cut at Neyveli.

\*268 SHRI MURASOLI MARAN Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state

(a) whether a decision has been taken to commission a second mine cut at Neyveli, and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN) (a) No Sir

(b) The proposal to commission a second mine cut at Neyveli is directly linked with the question of setting up additional capacity for power generation to meet the estimated power shortage in the southern region after 1973-74. The matter is presently under examination in

the concerned Departments of the Government of India.

#### New Process of Making Steel

\*269 DR. RANEN SEN Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state

(a) Whether a new process of making Steel has been invented by an Indian Metallurgist and has proved useful in actual practice, and

(b) If so, whether Government have given any trial to the method and if so, the result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMANGALAM) (a) The reference presumably is to the concept of Shri I. K. Bharati, which envisages production of sponge iron ore in a static/rectangular chamber by the reduction of iron oxide with the help of carbon monoxide and hydrogen generated from non-coking coal. This process has not yet been proved in actual practice.

(b) A number of complex technical features are involved even before pilot tests could be considered. Ministry has given consideration to the process, however, in the context of the nature of the process. It has been remitted for evaluation to experts. Their report is awaited.

#### Stock of Foodgrains with FCI and taking over of wholesale trade in foodgrains

\*270 SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) The total stock of foodgrains acquired by Food Corporation of India and the target for the next year,