

SHRI JAGANNATH RAO: Sir, it is not correct to say that sufficient quantities of rock phosphate are not available. In Rajasthan, roundabout Khetri itself, there are vast quantities available. Exploration was done earlier and it was never under contemplation for installation of a super-phosphate plant in Khetri based on imported rock phosphate. I do not know how the Minister says that this imported rock-phosphate for the plant was going to be operated.

SHRI T. A. PAI: What I say is that the location of this plant was based on the local rock phosphate deposits. For this this plant is being utilised. Samples are being analysed and tested and we find that the design will have to undergo a substantial change. Till then, we will have to depend upon imported thing. Whether the designs can be changed after we have gone through more than half way in regard to installation of this plant I am unable to say that at this stage.

Fighter Plane Deal with UK

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*409. **SHRI MUHAMMED SHE-RIFF:**

SHRI M. M. JOSEPH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any fighter plane deal was being negotiated with the UK and the UK backed out of the deal; and

(b) if so, the broad outlines thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE PRODUCTION) IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) No, Sir

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI MUHAMMED SHERIFF: Sir, may I know whether the Government

of India has any proposal to negotiate with any other country for the fighter planes?

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: There are some proposals under our consideration. It would not be in the public interest to disclose what we are considering and at what stage our consideration is in this regard.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Reports have appeared in the press to the effect that the Government of India was interested in negotiations with a U.K. firm for the supply of planes to replace the planes which are at present based on our Aircraft Carrier—Vikrant—because these planes are very old and they have become obsolete although their performance was creditworthy during the Bangla Desh war where they did not meet with stiff opposition for reasons which are known to everybody. But, I would like to know from him whether it is a fact, as reported in the press, that the United Kingdom firm had held out some hopes for supplying us with the new batch of planes to replace these old ones for the Vikrant Aircraft Carrier and subsequently that U.K. firm has backed out of its offer or promise. If that is true, whether it means that in another few years, the Vikrant, as an aircraft carrier, would really become practically obsolete. What is the situation regarding this. This is what the question pertains to, I think.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: It is a fact that the planes in the Aircraft Carrier 'Vikrant' need replacement and we are looking for the replacement. But, it is not a fact that the U.K. firm offered some planes and it has backed out of it because, as I have stated in my original answer, no decisions had been taken; no offers had been made or negotiated. There are, to-day, various makes of planes not only for the navy but also for the air force which are under consideration and since no deal had been struck, the question of its backing out does not arise.

MR. SPEAKER: No more questions on this I think.

Q. No. 410—Absent.

Q. No. 411, Shri Shanker Rao Savant.

Integrated Steel Plant in Maharashtra

*411. SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Maharashtra have proposed that an integrated Steel Plant be started in the Chandrapur District;

(b) whether enough quantity of iron and coal are available at the site;

(c) whether the Central Government have completed the techno-economic survey of the proposed site; and

(d) if so, the salient features of the survey report?.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) to (d). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b). The Government of Maharashtra have suggested that techno-economic feasibility studies may be undertaken for an integrated steel plant in the Surajgarh area of Chandrapur District. In the note prepared by them it has been proposed that the plant may be based on the iron ore deposits in the Surajgarh area and that while the requirements of metallurgical coal would have to be met from the Jharia Coalfields, the requirements of blendable coal could be met from selected Kanhan coalfields.

(c) and (d). A Working Group set up by the Ministry of Steel and Mines for identification of locations for the purpose of undertaking techno-economic feasibility studies for new steel capacity had considered the proposals of the Government of Maharashtra and had recommended *inter alia* that techno-economic feasibility studies may be commissioned for a plant based on iron ore deposits in the Rawghat-Suratgarh area. These studies which will be part of the long-term steel development programme are likely to be taken up during the Fifth Plan period.

SHRI SHANKERRAO SAVANT: I say that coal and ore are available in the near vicinity of Jharia. Why can't you have a project there?

THE MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRY AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI T. A. FAI): I appreciate the anxiety of the hon. Member to say that. When an integrated plant is to be started in this area it has been pointed out whether coal could be got from a certain coal field or not. Coal, of course, is also available in Madhya Pradesh. Unfortunately, we have now so many things on hand. The problem now is to see that the maximum output from the existing plants is assured. Expansion programme, that is under contemplation at Bokaro and Bhilai has to go through firstly. We have also to consider whether the other steel plants that are already in existence like the Durgapur and Rourkela also should or should not be expanded if that is much cheaper. That is the point so far as various steel plants are concerned. Then, again, the commitment to start three projects in the south is also under way. There are many sites in India which are perhaps quite suited from one or the other point of view for starting new projects, and we are undertaking a comprehensive study and a techno-economic survey of all these areas to examine the position. For, after all, we are not going to limit our