

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**Impact of rise in Railway Freight
on Price of Finished Steel and
Export Price of Iron and
Manganese Ores.**

*842. SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI :
Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES
be pleased to state :

(a) whether any final assessment has been made by Government about the impact of the rise in Railway freight rate on the price of finished steel and the export price of iron and manganese ores; and

(b) if so, to what extent the rise of ore freights by the Railways is likely to affect the competitive position of Indian manganese and iron ores in the world market?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MOHAN KUMARAMAN-GALAM) : (a) No, Sir. The impact of the Railway freight on finished steel, iron ore and manganese ore have been tentatively estimated at about Rs. 8.00, Rs. 1.75 and Rs. 1.75 per tonne respectively.

(b) In view of the very competitive international market for iron ore and manganese ore, it is possible that this impact may not be covered by better Sales realisations.

**Progress regarding conversion of land
into forest area**

*846. SHRI B. S. BHAURA : Will the
Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to
state:

(a) whether the area proposed to be added to the existing forest area, in the Forest Policy, 1952 to make one-third of the land area of India into forests, has not so far been converted into forests and if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the States have so far fulfilled the national target; and

(c) whether the States have not kept pace with the targets set in increasing the forest area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHER SINGH) : (a) and (b). The National Forest Policy Resolution of 1952 has laid down that 1/3rd of the land area of the country as a whole should be under forest. However, it has not laid down any specific target to be achieved in this connection by respective States. Forestry under the VII Scheduled of the Constitution is a State subject. In certain States like Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the percentage of forest area to the geographical area of the States/Union Territories concerned is, 37.6, 38.8, 38.7, 43.3 and 79.3 respectively. In other States/Union Territories where the forest area is less, they are endeavouring hard to bring more area under forests. The total forest area in the country has gradually increased from 73.44 million hectares to 75.27 million hectares in 1968-69, despite releasing 1.84 million hectares of forests for permanent alternative uses such as river valley projects, transmission lines, establishment of industries, extension of Agriculture and other purposes.

(c) Does not arise.