

commissioned as originally programmed. The original programme envisaged commissioning of the first generating unit by September, 1970.

Delays in the construction programme of the project are reported to have occurred on account of land acquisition and eviction cases, repeated stoppages of work owing to labour troubles and, in the initial stages, delays in the availability of foreign construction equipment. The Kerala authorities have intimated that the State Government took necessary steps, from time to time, to expedite the works.

All the three generating units of the Idukki Hydro-electric Project Stage I have since been commissioned during the course of 1976.

Combination Carriers

*562. SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether two combination carriers built only three years ago in the Yugoslavia shipyard the design and construction of which were supervised by the American Bureau of Shipping have developed cracks in the inner side of their hull; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) After about 2 years of operation, cracks were observed to have developed at certain locations in the double bottom skin of the two vessels.

Setting up of Corporation for Ex-servicemen

*563. SHRI DRONAMARAJU SATTANARAYANA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration to set up a

Corporation for the welfare of ex-servicemen in the country;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the time by which the Corporation will be set up?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JAGJIVAN RAM): (a) to (c). The proposal to establish a Public Sector Corporation to help ex-servicemen to set up industrial enterprises has been given up. It has, however, been decided that this work should be done by the Government departmentally and action is being taken accordingly.

Small Tractors

*564. SHRI RASHID MASOOD: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that low and middle class farmers are finding it beyond their means to purchase high-powered imported tractors and are interested only in smaller tractors like DD14 manufactured in Russia whose import was stopped in 1969; and

(b) whether Government propose to meet the demand of middle class farmers for small-power tractors?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Small horse power tractors in the range between 23 HP and 28 HP are being manufactured in the country and are available in the price range of Rs. 30,370 to Rs. 38,570, inclusive of 10 per cent excise duty. The makes of these tractors include the T-25 tractors of 25 HP which is being manufactured with U.S.S.R. collaboration. The T-25 is an improved version of the DT-14 which has been discontinued in U.S.S.R. The production of small power tractors is adequate to meet the demand of middle-class farmers.