

The production of cement in 1977-78 is estimated to be 19.28 million tonnes, which is highest level so far achieved. In spite of a record production, shortage have developed on account of higher demand for consumption of cement for public works as well as Agriculture, Industry & Housing. Substantial quantities of cement were also required to repair the damage due to cyclones in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. As a result of the ban on export from July 1977 except for irrevocable contractual obligations the export of cement in 1977-78 was 4.99 lakh tonnes as against 8.33 lakh tonnes in 1976-77. The internal demand by the end of 1982-83 has been estimated to be 30 million tonnes. But this may be an under estimate. If the present trends are any indication the demand may go up to 40 million tonnes. Government are implementing several measures aimed at increasing production by existing units installing additional capacity and for conservation and better utilisation of cement. More important steps include utilisation of pre-calculator technology and greater use of slag/fly ash and other pozzolanic material, setting up of new cement plants, at the location of steel plants to utilise local slag and limestone, establishment of mini cement plants to utilise smaller limestone deposits and also expediting the construction schedules of new units and expansions. Additional capacity of about 15.6 million tonnes has been approved by way of Letters of Intent/Licenses.

Free Transport Zone

*714 SHRI MOHINDER SINGH
SAYIAN WALA:

SHRI RAM SEWAK HAZ-
ARI:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a free transport zone will come into existence from 1st July,

1978 comprising of some northern States;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) the advantages thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) and (b). Delhi Administration and State Govts. of Punjab, Haryana and J & K have approved an agreement which provides that the entire region consisting of the States of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir would form one zone where the goods vehicles of one State could operate in the territory of the other without any restriction on their number, subject to counter-signatures and payment of prescribed fees and taxes. The agreement is to take effect from 1-7-78 after it has been published by all the State Govts. concerned in their official Gazettes.

(c) The scheme is designed to facilitate inter-State haulage of goods in the zone by road transport.

Alleged Burning of Files by Former Prime Minister

*715. CHOWDHARY BALBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No 3855 on the 14th December, 1977 regarding alleged burning of files by former Prime Minister and state-

(a) whether any in-depth enquiries have since been made and information collected regarding the nature of the files destroyed; and

(b) whether any of the concerned officials have been traced and linked for further action in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHARAN SINGH): (a) and (b). Enquiries into this matter are still in progress.