

Shri Bishwanath Roy: May I know the time by which the plants which are going to be set up will start production?

The Minister of Industrial Development and Company Affairs (Shri F.A. Ahmed): So far as the expansion of the NEPA mills is concerned action has already been taken and we hope that newsprint out of expansions unit will be manufactured by 1969.

granted provisional registration for manufacture of various types of Surgical Instruments. An application from another unit for registration with Directorate General of Technical Development is under examination. It is expected that major portion of the requirements of surgical instruments would be manufactured in the country in about five years period. Some imports may, however, continue particularly of highly specialised and sophisticated types for which there may not be large demand in numbers to undertake the economic manufacture thereof.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Surgical Instruments

*1296. **Shri Onkar Singh:**
Shri Onkar Lal Berwa:

Will the Minister of Industrial Development and Company Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) the amount spent for the import of surgical instruments in terms of foreign exchange; and

(b) the steps taken for attaining self-sufficiency in surgical instruments?

The Minister of Industrial Development and Company Affairs (Shri F. A. Ahmed): (a) The value of imports of certain surgical instruments for the past three years is given in the table below:—

1964-65	Rs. 61.79 lakhs
1965-66	Rs. 79.74 lakhs
1966-67 (upto Feb. 67)	Rs. 54.11 lakhs

(b) A Surgical Instruments Plant has been set up at Madras in the Public Sector with Russian assistance. The project was commissioned to operate from 1st September, 1965. This factory has a licensed capacity of 2.5 million pieces of about 25 types of surgical instrument of broad categories. There are some units in the Small Scale Sector producing a variety of surgical instruments. Two units in the private sector have been

Import of Heavy Soda Ash by S.T.C.

*1297. **Shri Onkar Lal Berwa:**
Shri Onkar Singh:

Will the Minister of Commerce be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Trading Corporation is contemplating to import 10,000 tonnes of heavy soda ash at a time when indigenous material is available in plenty; and

(b) if so, why this is being done despite tight foreign exchange position?

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Dinesh Singh): (a) and (b). STC has made arrangements for the imports of 6000 tons only. No further imports are proposed at present. Even though indigenous production is satisfactory, some marginal imports to serve as buffer stock have been considered necessary.

Expansion of Railway Yards on S.E. Railway

*1298. **Shri Chintamani Panigrahi:**
Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to expand the Cuttack and other Railway yards on the South-Eastern Railway to enable them to handle the off-take of the Paradeep Cargo;