

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite these increases, four out of five steel plants attached to the Steel Authority of India Limited are incurring losses; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor and in what manner it is proposed to meet these losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) There has been an average increase of about 15.6% in steel prices. These were revised by the Joint Plant Committee w.e.f. 24.12.1987.

(b) and (c) The profitability of SAIL's plants will be known only after finalisation and audit of the accounts for the current year.

470. [Transferred to the 1st March, 1988]

Attending to the Complaints by the CPWD in Laxmi Bai Nagar

471. SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that complaints lodged by the residents of Laxmi Bai Nagar, New Delhi with its CPWD Civil and Electrical Enquiry Office, are not being attended to for the past one month;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to ensure that these complaints are attended to and to update the stores of above Enquiry Office?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (c) All the complaints are

being attended to regularly and promptly. There is also no shortage of any building material in the Enquiry Office.

Rise in the Prices of Essential Commodities

472. SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the rate of increase of the prices of essential commodities, both wholesale and retail since December, 1987 and the reasons thereof; and

(b) the measures taken by Government to contain it?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) Relevant information is given in Statement-I and Statement-II. [See Appendix CXLV, Annexure No. 19] in respect of wholesale and retail prices respectively.

(b) Government has taken a number of measures to contain rise in the prices of essential commodities and improve their availability. The main thrust of the Government policy has been to increase production of various essential commodities, particularly those which are in short supply. Other measures include import of some essential commodities to augment domestic supplies, regulating export of some essential commodities, strengthening and expanding the Public Distribution System and strict enforcement of provisions of Essential Commodities Act and similar legislations against hoarders, black-marketeers by the State Government/UT Administrations.

On account of widespread drought conditions prices in general have been under pressure. To meet the situation, Chief Ministers of States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories have been urged from time to

time to strengthen Public Distribution System, press into operation mobile vans, review continuously the availability and prices of essential commodities through Control Rooms and committees set up at the State and District level, intensify dehoarding operations and take strict actions against hoarders and blackmarketeers in accordance with the provisions of Essential Commodities Act and similar other legislations. The Central Government has increased allocations of wheat, rice and edible oils of the States for distribution through the network of fair price shops. Available information indicates that State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have generally taken steps on above lines. The Central Government has also strengthened arrangements for monitoring of prices and availability of essential commodities. Meetings have been held with representatives of trade and industry urging them to take steps for containment of the prices.

Setting up of an Urban Water Supply Sewerage and Infrastructure Development Corporation

473. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:
Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to set up an Urban Water Supply Sewerage and Infrastructure Development Corporation; if so, what are the details regarding its constitution, scope of activity, source of financing, administrative powers and its control over implementation of schemes and

(b) in what manner the State Governments and/or concerned urban centres would be involved in the working of the Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) With a view to extending technical help and guidance as well as long term finance to the municipal bodies and local authorities in the country for the formulation and implementation of Urban Infrastructure Development Projects relating to Water Supply, Sewerage, Sanitation and other Urban Services, a proposal to set up an Urban Development & Urban Water Supply Financing Corporation is under consideration of the Government. In the Central sector of the 7th Five Year Plan, there is a provision of Rs. 55 crores for the setting up of this Corporation.

Increase in the Prices of Various Essential Commodities

474. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of various essential commodities under the Public Distribution System has been increased from 1.1.1988;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) to (c) There has been no change in the central issue prices of essential commodities supplied through the Public Distribution System w.e.f. 1.1.1988 except in the case of levy sugar the price of which has been revised upwards from Rs. 4.85 per