

Plea for Reduction of Prices of Steel Products

10. SHRI HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the 'Tribune' (Punjabi edition) of the 27th May, 1979 to the effect that the Punjab Government has appealed to the Central Government to reduce the prices of steel products; and

(b) if so, what decision Central Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Punjab Industries Minister in his letter had *inter alia* requested Government of India to consider the desirability of withdrawing the recent price increase of iron and steel materials in case of materials to be supplied to the small scale sector.

(b) While determining the steel prices, several factors like cost of production, fair return to producers generation of adequate resources for the modernisation, rehabilitation and development of steel industry to lessen its dependence on budgetary support and the likely impact of the price revision on the general price levels etc. are taken into account. Thus, there is no scope for withdrawing the recent price increase. The units in the small scale sector are being supplied steel through the State Small Scale Industries Corporations at a price which is Rs. 40/- per tonne less than the corresponding prices of the main producers' stockyards and the supplies to the Corporations are also being increased progressively.

Shortfall in the Production of Petroleum Products

11. SHRI CHADALAVADA VENKATARAQ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the production of petroleum products has fallen this year as

compared to the production of last year; and

(b) if so, what measures have been taken by Government to augment the production?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) The total production of petroleum products in the refineries of the country in 1978-79 was about 24.19 million tonnes as against the total production of about 23.22 million tonnes in 1977-78.

(b) In view of the growing demand for petroleum products, additional refining capacities are being planned with a view to produce the necessary middle distillate products like kerosene, diesel, etc. in the country.

Import of Drugs

12. SHRI CHADALAVADA VENKATARAQ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the names, quantity and value of drugs imported during the year 1977-78 and 1978-79;

(b) whether these drugs can be produced in the country, if so, by when arrangements will be made therefor; and

(c) if not what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Commodity/countrywise figures of imports are being regularly published in the Monthly Statistics of the Foreign Trade of India Volume II (Imports both in terms of quantity and value) published by Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta, which may kindly be referred to.

(b) and (c) One of the prime objective of the New Drug Policy is to aim at quick self-sufficiency in the output of drugs with a view to reducing the quantum of imports and for this purpose to develop self reliance in drug

technology. The measures proposed to be taken by the Govt. in furtherance of these objectives have been set out in the Statement on New Drug Policy, laid on the Table of the Sabha on 29th March, 1978.

Supply of crude oil from the United Arab emirates

13. SHRI CHADALAVADA VENKATARAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have requested the United Arab Emirates to supply more crude oil; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BHAUGUNA): (a) and (b) Minister of Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilizers visited UAE in November, 1978. As a result of his visit, UAE agreed to increase the quantum of crude supplies from one million tonnes contracted for in each of the years 1975—78 to 1.5 million tonnes during 1979. At the request of the Minister of Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilizers, the UAE Oil Minister has also agreed to consider the possibility of further enhancing the level of crude supplies during next year.

Proposal for financing' the elections in th_e country

14. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Election Commissioner has recently made a proposal to the effect that Government should make ar-

rangements for financing the elections in the country; and

(b) if so, what is the Governments reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. D. PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The question whether the election expenses of candidates at elections to Parliament and State Legislatures should be borne by the Government, and, if so, to what extent is under active consideration of the Government, as part of the comprehensive proposals for electoral reform.

Monopoly hold on the production of consumer goods by multinationals

15. SHRIMATI IHAMIDA HABIBULLAH: SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that multinationals have monopoly hold on the production of many consumer goods in the country;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

• THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI S. D. PATIL): (a) and (b) There are three multinational corporations which have multinational hold in the production of certain