

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