

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry failed to meet the urgent requirements of railways in regard to the rails required for track replacement;

(b) whether it is also a fact that except Durgapur Steel Plant, no other steel unit has the necessary capacity for rolling rails; and

(c) if so, what steps are proposed to be taken to meet the urgent requirements of railways in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) 75 lb rails are supplied to the Indian Railways by Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO). SAIL supplies 90 lb and 105 lb rails to the Railways. The supply of 75 lb rails to the Railways till the end of February, 1980 was about 9500 tonnes against the commitment of 12000 tonnes for the whole of the current financial year. TISCO expects to supply about 11000 tonnes of these rails to the Railways by the end of the financial year. The supply of 90 lb rails to the Indian Railways till the end of February, 1980 was 106,300 tonnes which exceeded the commitment of 100,000 tonnes for the whole of the current financial year. In respect of 105 lb rails, supplies till the end of February, 1980 were 51,130 tonnes against the year's commitment of 100,000 tonnes. Actual supplies from SAIL during the year, as a whole, will be short of the commitment by about 30-35,000 tonnes.

(b) Durgapur Steel Plant does not produce any rails. This item is produced by the Bhilai Steel Plant of SAIL, and by TISCO.

(c) The main reasons for not fulfilling the commitments are shortage in recent months, of Ferro-silicon which is essential for making rail steel; as well as problems relating to supply of coking coal and power. Indi-

genous production of Ferro-silicon has been severely affected due to power cuts imposed on the producers of this material. Import of this material has, therefore, been arranged. SEBs have also been requested to exempt Ferro-Alloy producers from the power cuts. To overcome Coking Coal problems, import of coking coal was arranged. In respect of power problems, generation from the steel plants' captive units is being maximised, and operation of the various units in the plants staggered for optimising utilisation of available power.

#### **Closure of Sound and Light Show at Sabarmati Ashram**

480. SHRI KHURSHED ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Sound and Light Show mounted at Sabarmati Ashram has since been closed down;

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

(c) if so, whether Government propose to review the decision in view of the popularity of the show?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): (a) to (c) The information is being collected, and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Import of essential commodities**

481. PROF. RAMLAL PARIKH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the shortages in essential commodities started after the imports of these essential commodities were cut down;

(b) if so, what were the reasons for the cut in imports;

(c) what were the commodity-wise imports of each quarter from 1977 to the end of 1979;