

commercial establishments etc. employing 20 or more persons. There is no proposal at present to extend these schemes to wholesale traders and shops, where the number of employees is less than four. However, the question of extending the Social Security Schemes to rural workers is under examination.

(b) and (c) Do not arise."

Setting up of an Office of SAIL International Ltd. in USA

313. SHRI DHARAMCHAND JAIN:

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

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to set up an office of the SAIL International Ltd. in USA; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA) : (a) and (b) SAIL International Limited is considering setting up of an office in U.S.A. The proposal is in a very preliminary stage of consideration.

Control over Iron ore Mining

314. SHRI INDERDEEP SINHA;
SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that about 70 per cent of the iron ore mining and its export marketing is controlled by private mine owners; and

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

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to bring the entire iron ore mining industry in the public sector; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. The figures of production/exports during 1976 by Public/Private Sector are given below:

(in million tonnes)

	Production (1976)	Exports (1976-77)
All India	4'39	23'20
Public Sector	20'4	11'80
Private Sector	23'5	11'40

(c) No, Sir.

Sponge Iron Plants

315. SHRI PRANAB K. MUKHERJEE:
Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India have received any proposal from the Government of Yugoslavia for financing sponge iron plants in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA) : (a) and (b) At a meeting of the Sub Group on Indo-Yugoslav Industrial Co-operation held in New Delhi on 18th/19th May, 1977 the prospects for setting up a sponge iron plant in India with Yugoslav collaboration was noted and it was agreed that the feasibility report prepared by the India side would be further discussed with a team of experts from Yugoslavia. These discussions were accordingly held on 18th October, 1977 and have brought out that taking account the alternative demands for gas from Bombay High for higher priority uses e.g. fertiliser etc. and its relatively high price, production of sponge iron may not be economically feasible. Both sides have therefore, agreed to explore the possibility of collaborating in the set-