

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-

ting up of sponge iron plants in their countries where cheaper gas may be available.

Steel Plant at Paradeep

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

(a) whether Government propose to set up a three million ton export-based steel plant at Paradeep in Orissa; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI BIJU PATNAIK):

(a) and (b) Government is considering the feasibility of setting up three port-based, export-oriented plants at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Paradeep. Capacity of such plants, their product-mix and the time-table for setting up such plants would depend on growth of internal and external demand of Steel.

P. C. Os. in Cooch Behar Districts

317. SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number and the location of Public Call Offices opened in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal Circle during the last three years and so far during the current year;

(b) the number and the location of such public call offices likely to be opened in that district during the remaining part of the year 1977-78?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) During the last three years long distance Public Call Offices have been opened at the following ten places in Cooch Behar District of West Bengal Circle:

1. Gitalbaha
2. Bamanhat
3. Choudhuryhat
4. Balakandi
5. Nigam Nagar
6. Chilakhana
7. Tapurhat
8. Sahebganj
9. Sitalkuchi
10. Sitaihat.

This year, no long distance P.C.O. has been opened in the district so far.

(b) During 1977-78, long distance P.C.Os. are likely to be opened at the following four places in Cooch Behar district subject to availability of equipment:

1. Bairagirhat
2. Jamaldah
3. Palimari
4. Gopalpur.

Upgrading of Sub-Post Offices in Jalpaiguri

318. SHRI PRASENJIT BARMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to upgrade Dinhat and Alipurduar Sub-Post Offices to Head Post Offices under the Jalpaiguri Division of West Bengal Circle; and

(b) if so, by when these Sub-Post Offices are likely to be upgraded?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) There is no proposal under Government's consideration to upgrade Dinhat and Alipurduar Sub-Post Offices to Head Post Offices under Jalpaiguri Postal Division.

(b) Does not arise.