

irrigation industries, as also irrigation, power and housing programmes in the 1977-78 Plan. Though precise estimates of the employment created are not available the Annual Plan programmes are believed to have generated additional employment opportunities during 1977-78.

Change in the concept of minimum wages

460. SHRI BHABANI CHARAN PA TT ANA YAK: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the suggestions made at the Fifth Industrial Relations Conference recently held at New Delhi under the auspices of the Employer's Association for changing the entire concept of minimum wages, freezing of the wages at the present level and non-consideration of bonus as deferred wages; and if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to protect the labourers and workers from exploitation by the employers?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a)- In a background paper on wages, incomes and prices policy for the Fifth Industrial Relations Conference held under the auspices of the Employers Association, in New Delhi on 13-14 February, 1978, which seems to have been prepared in the context of the terms of reference of the Study Group on Wages, Incomes and Prices it was suggested that, coinciding with economic policies which the paper urged the Government to adopt to stabilize prices of bulk commodities which constitute the cost of living

708 RS—3.

index, DA might be abolished. It was also suggested that as an adjunct, if wage revision was at all necessary, the neutralisation percentages to meet the price rise must be decided by Government. While suggesting abolition of the present bonus scheme, the paper suggested a scheme of incentive, payments to be introduced wherever feasible.

(b) The Government have taken note of the contents of the paper.

(c) The Government remain ever vigilant to safeguard the interests of the workers.

Import of steel from foreign countries

461. SHRI PRAKASH MEHROTRA:
SHRIMATI HAMIDA
HABIBULLAH:
SHRI SAWAISINGH
SISODIA:
SHRIMATI LEELA DAMODARA MENON;
SHRIMATI MARGARET
ALVA:
SHRI DEVENDRA NATH
DWIVEDI:

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

(a) whether Government propose to import steel in large quantities and to build its buffer stock to maintain price stability in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b) Steel Authority of India Ltd. proposes to import about 600,000 tonnes, of steel in categories which are in short supply. This includes about 190,000 tonnes of steel of some categories which would be kept as a buffer stock to stabilise prices.