

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is understood that a US Government spokesman has denied reports that US has offered to give arms to China.

Strikes/lockouts in industrial units

503. SHRI VENIGALLA SATYA-NARAYANA: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the total number of mandays lost due to strikes and lock-outs in industrial units during the last three years up to March, 1978 was 2.5 millions; and

(b) what are the names of the factories under the Central Government in which there have been strikes and lock-outs during that period?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) According to the information received by the Labour Bureau, up to 18th May, 1978, the total mandays lost due to strikes and lock-outs in industrial units during the first three months of 1978 was 2.5 million.

(b) The information is being collected.

Statement made by the Chinese Vice-Premier regarding Chinese support to Pakistan on Kashmir

504. SHRI VENIGALLA SATYA-NARAYANA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported statement of the Chinese Vice-Premier regarding Chinese support to Pakistan on Kashmir; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Government of India thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) China has in the past made similar expressions of its stand. On this occasion, the Chinese Ambassador was told that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. It had acceded to India long ago and there could be no question of self-determination for a part of a country.

Criticism of new price policy of steel by small units

505. SHRI VENIGALLA SATYA-NARAYANA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the new price policy with regard to the supply of steel to small scale units has been criticised by the small scale units; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b) Some of the representations received in connection with the recent price increase in steel with effect from 4th/5th June, 1978 have *inter alia* referred to the possible adverse impact on small scale units. However, actually the competitive position of the small scale units *vis-a-vis* the large scale units (who used to take their material earlier in rake loads at JPC price) has improved now, firstly as the gap between the JPC price and stockyard price of various steel items has been narrowed down to Rs. 35/- per tonne with the revision of prices; and, secondly it has also been decided to supply steel to small scale units through the Small Scale Industries Corporations at Rs. 40/- per tonne less than the stockyard prices.

Supply of pig iron and coke to small scale industries

506. SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI:

SHRI T. BASHEER:

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA:

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

(a) whether Government are aware that the system of supply of pig iron and coke to small scale industries through State industrial associations has been adversely commented upon by various organisations as being costly and irregular; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to supply wagons and rakes directly to the small scale industries, associations and industrial co-operative estates to save the small scale industrialists from the payment of heavy charges to the State industrial associations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI KARIA MUNDA): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Mr. Ceausescu's proposal on Sino-Indian ties

507. SHRI T. BASHEER: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mr. Ceausescu on his return from China brought a proposal on Sino-Indian ties and discussed the same with him and the Prime Minister during his recent visit to India, as per the report published in the 'Times of India' of the 31st May, 1978; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. KUNDU): (a) President Ceausescu of Romania stated generally that in conversations with him, Chinese leaders expressed the desire that China wanted an improvement of her relations with India.

(b) The Government continues its efforts to improve the climate of bilateral relations with China on the basis of the Panchsheel.

Aluminium project at Ratnagiri

508. SHRI ARVIND GANESH

KULKARNI:

SHRIMATI USHI KHAN:

SHRI GURUDEV GUPTA:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposal to set up an aluminium project at Ratnagiri has been finally shelved; if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Ratnagiri aluminium project is being scuttled by the Birla Group to ensure the supply of raw material from Ratnagiri and Konkan areas to their Belgaum plant?

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

(a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

Malpractices in the E.S.I. Scheme Dispensaries

509. SHRIMATI USHI KHAN: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the prevalence of malpractices on a large scale in the E.S.I. scheme Dispensaries in various places in the country such as, giving false certificates and charging of heavy under-hand fees by doctors;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the hospitals run under the Scheme are badly managed and medicines are usually not available there; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to put an end to malpractices and to streamline the working of the Scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. RAM KRIPAL SINHA): (a) The administration of medical benefit under the