

Haryana, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Assam for production of sponge iron but all these schemes are still in the initial stages.

(b) and (c) The Metallurgical & Engineering Consultants (India) Ltd. have prepared a feasibility report for location of a sponge iron plant in Bihar-Orissa region and in Karnataka. Rourkela is one of the sites proposed in the Bihar-Orissa region. A decision will be taken after considering raw material parameters, economic viability and availability of resources.

Ferro-Vanadium project in Orissa

773. SHRI B. C. MAHANTI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in the Ferro-Vanadium Project in Orissa ;

(b) whether the project has been cleared by the Public Investment Board; and

(c) if so, by when the work at the site is likely to start ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) The Steel Authority of India Ltd., are examining the technical and financial aspects of the scheme and their recommendations are awaited.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise at this stage.

Appointment of Shri G. Parthasarthy as Chairman, Policy Planning Committee

774. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Shri G. Parthasarthy has recently been appointed Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs;

(b) what would be the exact nature of duties to be assigned to him as per the decisions of the Pillai Committee; and

(c) what would be his position in the warrant of precedence ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The broad functions of the Committee as described in the Pillai Committee remain unchanged. It was expected to "examine important aspects of India's foreign policy in the overall context of the changing world situation", and further that it would consider "current and anticipated problems and prepare long-term programmes for the achievement of India's foreign policy objectives".

The new Chairman will devote his full attention to supervising and guiding the Policy Planning Division and in presiding the Policy Planning Committee in order that considered recommendations can be placed before the Government.

(c) He will rank below the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Reports on Iron Ore producing Regions

775. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Iron Ore Board for Bihar, Orissa, Karnataka and Goa have prepared status reports ;

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

(c) whether it is a fact that substantial gaps in the knowledge of the country's iron ore reserves and serious deficiencies in actual mining practices have been revealed in these reports;

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to improve it ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Iron Ore Board have undertaken