

Production and despatch of Coal from Mines under CM.A. and B.C.C.L.

1727. SHRI KALYAN ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state;

(a) the production and despatch of coal, region-wise, from the mines under the Coal Mines Authority and B.C.C.L. in the last six months upto November, 1973; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to improve the production and despatch and results thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUBODH HANSDA): (a) the information is given in the attached statement. [See Appendix I XXXVI, Annexure No. 102.]

(b) Steps taken to improve the production and despatch of coal include reorganisation of the taken over coal mines, reopening of closed mines, procurement of equipment and machinery on an emergent basis, provision of adequate explosives, better wages and improved working conditions for the workers, setting up of a High Level Standing Committee to look into the problems of coal transport and distribution to ensure regular supplies to the various consumers, setting up of a Joint Cell at Calcutta to coordinate and arrange wagons for movement of coal. It is too early to know the results.

Reopening of closed coal mines

1728. SHRI KALYAN ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of closed coking and non-coking coal mines which have been reopened after take over and nationalisation and their names and present production;

(b) whether the retrenched workers have been taken back in these mines and if so, their number in each mine which has been reopened;

(c) the amount of money invested in these mines after reopening; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to reopen all the other closed mines and details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagar Steel Plants

1729. SHRI SHYAMLAL GUPTA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the recommendations of the Study Group set up to examine the scope for reducing the capital and operational cost in Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagar Steel Plants;

(b) whether Government have arrived at any final decision on these recommendations; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) to (c) In the context of the steel price structure then prevailing, the Study Group had recommended that a capacity of about 3 million ingot tonnes would have to be considered for each of the two steel plants to be set up at Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagar to make their operations viable. The Public Investment Board has also supported the proposal for a capacity of about 3 million ingot tonnes each at Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagar and the Steel Authority of India Limited would soon be taking up work on the preparation of Detailed Project Reports for these two plants.

Durgapur Steel Plant

1730. SHRI M. K. MOHTA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Durgapur Steel Plant remained closed for a number of days during September, 1973 following a labour dispute;

(b) if so, the number of days for which the plant remained closed and the nature of the dispute; and

(c) the loss suffered by Government in terms of production and value?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) and (b) The workers of the Blast Furnace Cast House of Durgapur Steel Plant were on an illegal strike from 25th August to 17th September 1973, paralysing the operations of the steel plant. The strike began as a result of a warning letter issued to one worker for refusing to do the job which he had been doing for many years.

(c) It is not possible to evaluate the exact tonnage of production lost because of the strike as it took several weeks after the end of the strike for the Blast Furnaces to be brought back to normal operation. However,