

officers from the commercial operating and mechanical departments of the Nagpur Division had investigated the question of abnormal increase in the number of damaged wagons for adjustment by crane power in 'sick lines' at Dongargarh in 1967-68;

(b) if so, the details of report submitted by committee;

(c) whether it is a fact that on receipt of report of the committee, the work of adjustment done by the handling contractor was withdrawn and the work was undertaken departmentally;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the said contractor had protested to the divisional authorities against the withdrawal of adjustment work in sick lines in contravention of terms and conditions of the contract; and

(e) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GULZARILAL NANDA) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER RIVER BHAGIRATHI

703. SHRI SASANKASEKHAR SANYAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the time by when the railway bridge over the Bhagirathi river will be fit for the movement of rail traffic from the Farakka side to the Khejuria-ghat side; and

(b) whether Government have any proposal to run the Darjeeling Mail and some passenger trains along that bridge via Howrah-Farakka on the Eastern Railway?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GULZARILAL NANDA) : (a) The rail bridge incorporated in the Farakka Barrage (together with the diversion of the Railway track at either end) is expected to be commissioned by the end of July, 1971.

(b) Yes.

SALEM STEEL PLANT

704. SHRI THILLAI VILLALAN : Will the Minister of STEEL AND

HEAVY ENGINEERING be pleased to state what steps have so far been taken by Government for the setting up of Salem Eteel Plant?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND HEAVY ENGINEERING (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI) : Since the Government's decision on setting up three new steel plants at Vishakhapatnam, Hospet and Salem, announced by the Prime Minister on the 17th April, 1970, a number of steps have been initiated at the Government level towards implementation of these projects. Four Committees are already at work, three of which are concerned with identifying the sources of raw materials, i.e. coal, iron ore and others, respectively. The Fourth Committee is to select precise site on which the plant will be installed. The Site Selection Committee visited the Salem area in the last week of June and had discussions with the State Government officials. Steps are also being taken to appoint Consultants for the project.

STEEL PLANT IN ORISSA

705. SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS : Will the Minister of STEEL AND HEAVY ENGINEERING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Orissa alongwith the Deputy Chief Minister and the Minister of Industries recently met the Prime Minister in connection with the setting up of a steel plant in that state during the Fourth Five Year Plan period;

(b) if so, the nature of the decision taken; and

(c) what was the specific reply of the Prime Minister to this demand?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND HEAVY ENGINEERING (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Prime Minister invited the attention of the Chief Minister to her statement in Parliament and stated decisions involving large investments could be made only on strong techno-economic considerations. She declined to make any commitment in regard to the proposal.