

DEMAND FOR BILLETS AND CLOSURE OF RE-ROLLING MILLS

745. SHRI JAGAT NARAIN : Will the Minister of STEEL AND HEAVY ENGINEERING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that re-rolling mills have developed a good export market for their products and any export of billets from India constitutes a national loss of foreign exchange as foreign earning per tonne of bar and rod is higher than that for billets;

(b) what are the reasons for the export of billets when the demand for billets in India has never been fulfilled ; and

(c) whether it is a fact that some re-rolling mills in India have closed down in the course of last few months ; if so, the reasons therefor and steps taken by Government to prevent such recurrence ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND HEAVY ENGINEERING (SHRI K. C. PANT) : (a) and (b) Export market at present for bars and rods is good. It is also true that finished products like bars and rods fetch higher prices than semi-finished products like billets. For these reasons, export of billets has, for the present, been prohibited except in discharge of past commitments, and in special cases in small quantities in the national interest. In view of the fact that rolling mills are being established in a number of developing countries, the longterm market in these countries is likely to be more for billets than for bars and rods. Government, therefore, consider it unwise to prohibit export of billets altogether and thus lose contact with the billet markets in these countries.

(c) Some re-rolling mills have had to close down for varying period during the last few months for want of billets. Apart from discouraging exports as mentioned in reply to (a) and (b) above, Government have asked all the main producers to increase production of billets to the maximum extent possible. Steps have also been take a to utilise surplus ingots available at Durgapur for being rolled into billets at T.I.S.CO. Further, attempts are being made on an experimental basis to cut the available surplus ingots at Durgapur for use of rerollers. These and such further steps as may be possible

in this respect will be pursued to maximise the production of billets.

H. M. T. WATCH FACTORIES IN STATES

746. SHRI JAGAT NARAIN : Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERNAL TRADE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to set up Hindustan Machine Tools watch factories in some States ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERNAL TRADE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED) : (a) and (b) It is proposed to set up a factory for production of watches in Kashmir by Hindustan Machine Tools Limited. Details of this project are being finalised.

CIRCULAR RAILWAY IN CALCUTTA

747. SHRI M. K. MOHTA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total cost sanctioned for the construction of a circular railway in Calcutta ;

(b) the amounts of the total cost to be borne by the Central and State Governments, separately ; and

(c) the time by when the project is likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH) : (a) to (c) A scheme for the extension of the suburban line from Dum Dum to Princep Ghat, in Calcutta has been included in the draft 4th Five Year Plan. The final location survey for this will be taken up during the current year. The approximate cost of the project is about Rs. 30 crores. The exact cost and the time the project will take for completion, will however be known only after the final location survey is completed and detailed estimates are prepared. The work is likely to be executed at the cost of the Central Government.