

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED) : (a) No, Madam.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

STEPS TO ENCOURAGE EXPORT OF IRON AND MANGANESE ORE

*314. SHRI N. R. MUNISWAMY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing heavy export duties on iron and manganese ores are a disincentive in the field of export resulting in adverse effect to the mining activity;

(b) if so, whether Government have any proposal under consideration for reducing the duties;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what other alternative measures are proposed to be taken to step up the exports in view of the downward trend being shown in the world prices of these ores ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH) : (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

Government have received representations that the export duties on iron ore and manganese ore are acting as disincentives for export and should be abolished or reduced. When representations are made to Government they are, naturally examined but exports of iron ore have shown an upward trend in the past few years. Manganese ore exports are being maintained at the average level of about 1.2 million tonnes inspite of severe competition from other sources of supply.

Development of deep draft ports, installation of mechanised ore loading facilities and improvement of road and rail transport facilities are some of the major measures taken up by the Government to step up the exports of ores. The M.M.T.C. is also negotiating long term contracts with buyers in various countries for supply of Indian ores.

DEMAND FOR HIGHER RETENTION PRICES FOR STEEL

*315. SHRI K. P. SUBRAMANIA MENON : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES AND METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that steel producers have been demanding higher retention prices; and

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any decision in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL, MINES AND METALS (SHRI P. C. SETHI) : (a) and (b) Presumably, the hon. Member is referring to the selling prices as there are no retention prices for steel now.

All the main producers have been demanding an increase in the prices of various categories of steel on the ground of escalation of cost of production owing to the increases in the price of coal and railway freight, increase of excise duty and sales tax and increase in wages and dearness allowance.

With the removal of statutory control of prices and distribution over all categories of steel with effect from May 1, 1967, the work relating to the fixation of prices has been entrusted to the Joint Plant Committee who consult Government before effecting any revision in the prices.

The Joint Plant Committee have announced revised prices for various categories of iron and steel on July 30, 1968.

TRAVANCORE TITANIUM CORPORATION

*316. SHRI LOKANATH MISRA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Travancore Titanium Corporation has been given an expansion licence for eighteen thousand tons of titanium dioxide per year;

(b) if so, when was this licence issued;

(c) what was the corporations' original production capacity; and

(d) whether any of its raw materials were imported ?