

(b) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY): (a) and (b) In the mechanised mines of Rajhara (iron ore) and Nandini (limestone), the raising of ore is undertaken through departmental labour. The output of these mechanised mines is, however, not adequate to meet the increasing raw material requirements of the Bhilai Steel Plant. Steps are in hand to extend mechanised mining facilities, for iron ore at Rajhara and Dalli and for limestone at Nandini. It would take some time for these facilities to be installed. In the intervening period, the increased iron ore and limestone requirements are being met by manual mining, for iron ore at Dalli and for limestone at Nandini. Since these arrangements are purely temporary and for a short period contract labour has been engaged. However, every effort is being made to restrict the employment of contract labour to the minimum number and to the shortest duration. Welfare amenities for the contract labour are provided either directly by the plant or in terms of the contracts.

2. The operations in the Hirri Dolomite Mines are of an intermittent character and the employment of labour varies very widely over the year. In view of the intermittent nature of the mining, the raising is done through contract labour. Nevertheless, steps to mechanise the mine are in hand.

MINING PERMISSION TO PRIVATE FIRMS IN PUBLIC SECTOR MINES

357. SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private firms like Sataria Co. and K. N. Podder and Co. have been permitted to mine dolomite within the notified area of the Hissi Mines of the Bhilai Steel Plant; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons and conditions for granting this privilege to private companies in public sector mines?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

TENDERS FOR COAL HANDLING WORK ON S. E. RAILWAY

358. SHRI P. K. KUMARAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether any representation has been received from any Labour Co-operatives working for the S. E. Railway, complaining that the railway authorities have called for tenders from contractors for coal handling work at different centres on that Railway; and

(b) if so, whether it is the policy of the Government to treat Labour Co-operatives and private contractors on par and award the work on the basis of lowest quotation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHAM NATH): (a) Yes.

(b) The Labour Co-operative Societies of actual workers have to tender along with other contractors and the contracts are awarded on the basis of lowest acceptable quotations. Railway Administrations have, however, been given the discretion not to call for tenders in cases where it is proposed that contracts should be given to Cooperative Societies of actual workers without sacrificing financial considerations.

SELECTION OF SENIOR ACCOUNTANTS

359. SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Northern Railway recently constituted a selection board