

MINES AND METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to seek private U.S. and Japanese collaboration to exploit iron ore mines in India; and

(b) if so, what are the terms on which foreign collaboration is sought?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL, MINES AND METALS (SHRI CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK) : (a) and (b) The Government have approved a proposal for conducting the feasibility studies and pilot plant tests on the Kudremukh Iron Ore Deposits in Mysore at a cost not exceeding Rs. 45 lakhs, by the National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd., with technical collaboration and financial partnership of M/s. Marcona Corporation of U. S. A. and three Japanese Companies viz. (i) Mitsui & Co. Ltd., (ii) Okura Trading Co. Ltd., and (iii) Nissho Co. Ltd.. The approval is subject to certain conditions being fulfilled for which the National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd., are negotiating with the foreign collaborators.

CLOSURE OF BRICK KILNS DUE TO SHORTAGE OF COAL

387. SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of STEEL, MINES and METALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been acute shortage of coal which adversely affected the production of bricks in several parts of Uttar Pradesh during the last brick season;

(b) whether the non-availability of coal was due to shortage of wagons;

(c) the steps taken by Government to relieve the shortage and to avoid its recurrence in future; and

(d) whether any reports about closure of brick kilns resulting in unemployment have come to the notice of Government?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL, MINES AND METALS (SHRI CHOWDHARY RAM SEWAK) : (a) and (b) There had been a shortage of coal affecting production of bricks at some places of U. P. during the last brick season. This shortage is reportedly due to large scale cancellations of programmes for coal by Agents during January and February, 1968, which led to an artificial shortage of about 2 lakh tonnes of bricks

burning coal. There was also agitation and high absenteeism of firemen in the Eastern Railway which hampered movement of coal in April, 1968.

(c) The following steps have been taken to relieve the shortage of coal and to avoid its recurrence:—

(i) Acceptance of programmes by Railways for movement of coal in block rakes to U. P. have been increased considerably as compared to the busy season of 1967. These programmes represent an increase of 50 per cent in respect of movements to Eastern districts of U. P. and over 100 per cent in respect of movements to Western districts of U. P.

(ii) Instead of leaving coal programming to nominated Coal Agents, the U. P. State Government has evolved a scheme for setting up of Co-operative Societies/Registered Associations in each district on whose behalf the District Magistrates will sponsor programmes, which may be submitted either directly on collieries or through coal agents. The Coal Agents who get their allocations cancelled after sponsoring by the State Government would be blacklisted so as to eliminate chances of artificial shortages.

(d) No reports about the closure of brick kilns have been received by the Government

SUBURBAN RAILWAYS

388. DR. BHAI MAHAVIR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the names of cities in the country where suburban railways are being run for the benefit of commuters;

(b) whether they provide facilities for carrying commercial freight over short distances; and

(c) by what time the Ring Railway is likely to start operating in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) Bombay, Calcutta, Madras.

(b) Yes, certain trains on certain sections provide such facilities.

(c) The sanctioned project is called "Delhi Avoiding Lines and Connected Traffic Facilities", and not Ring Railway. It is expected that project will be completed by the end of December, 1968.