

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RUPINPAL DAS): (a) Government have seen press reports attributed to high officials of the U.S. Administration according to which the use of force on the question of oil in certain circumstances of grave emergency is not excluded.

(b) and (c). The Government of India are opposed to the use of force in international relations. In the course of recent discussions between our Prime Minister and the Vice-Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, it was agreed that the Gulf region should be free from any tension or interference by outside powers so that countries of the region could devote their efforts to economic development. The Government are also in touch with other like-minded Governments to tackle the question of energy and raw materials.

Proposal of U.S. Shipping Conference to merge Bunker Charge with Freight

574. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the U.S. Shipping Conference has proposed to merge bunker charge with freight;

(b) if so, Government's opinion on it; and

(c) the reaction of the Indian shipping companies to this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI H. M. TRIVEDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is not opposed to the levy of bunker surcharge or to any variation of it. However, Government is averse to any unilateral integration of any part of the bunker surcharge in the rates of freight.

(c) The Indian shipping companies concerned have taken up the matter with the Conference to revise the decision understood to have taken on the basis of a majority vote, but it is learnt that their efforts have so far not been successful.

Rehabilitation of Burnpur Steel Plant

575. SHRI C. K. CHANDRAPAN: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government have decided to rehabilitate the Burnpur Steel Plant;

(b) the amount Government want to spend for I.I.S.C.O. Plant;

(c) Government's expectation from this Plant; and

(d) the amount Government have spent till now on this Plant?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI SUKHDEV PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (d). Government are not spending any money on the Plant Rehabilitation Scheme. The Plant Rehabilitation Scheme is being financed by a loan from a consortium of Public Financial Institutions/Commercial Banks headed by the Industrial Development Bank of India. The total estimated cost of the scheme is at present Rs. 48 crores. The amount spent on the scheme upto the end of December, 1974 is Rs. 21.71 crores.

(c) After completion of the Plant Rehabilitation Scheme by the end of 1976-77, the production from the steel plant is expected to be upto the rated capacity of 1 million tonnes steel in gots a year.