

for three industrial units in Rajasthan to manufacture paper and straw boards;

(b) if so, what is the total annual licensed capacity of each of the units;

(c) what will be the total out-put of these industries; and

(d) whether these industries will be in public sector or private sector?

The Minister of Industry (Shri Kanungo): (a) to (d). One licence for the manufacture of 3000 (three thousands) tonnes of paper per annum and another for the manufacture of 4,500 (four thousands and five hundred) tonnes of straw board per annum have been issued to two private parties.

China-Clay Mining

2033. Shri H. C. Soy: Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that China-clay mining industry in Bihar and elsewhere in India is in slump for the last few years; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof, and the steps taken to boost up the China-Clay Mining?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering (Shri P. C. Sethi): (a) No. The production of China-clay in the country is gradually increasing from year to year since 1958.

(b) Does not arise.

Rupee Payment Agreement with U.A.R.

2034. Shri Flrodia: Will the Minister of International Trade be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ceiling under the rupee payment agreement between India and the United Arab Republic has been reached; and

(b) if so, whether the Government of India intend to buy the Egyptian cotton against payment in sterling?

The Minister of International Trade (Shri Manubhai Shah): (a) Registration of sales of UAR cotton to India is reported to have been completed in fulfilment of the understandings reached in the current Trade arrangement; under the same arrangement there is also scope for importing additional cotton from the UAR.

(b) Does not arise.

Amendment of Mines Act

2035. Shri D. C. Sharma: Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to amend the Mines Act; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal and the stage at which it stands at present?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering (Shri P. C. Sethi): (a) Yes

(b) The following are the important proposals for the amendment of the Mines Act, 1952 which are under consideration:—

- (1) to remove certain practical difficulties at present being faced in its enforcement because of some defective definitions and procedural provisions;
- (2) to provide for additional safety regulations being framed and for setting up of an All India Mines Development Board to which plans for working of mines would be submitted in advance for approval from the point of view of safety;
- (3) to associate workers more intimately with safety measures by providing for the formation of pit safety committees and inspection of mines by workers' representatives, and
- (4) to provide for enhanced penalties for certain serious offences.