

Work on developing suitable systems for these items has been undertaken. As yet, the only item which is near commercial viability is that for water and space heating. In addition, a pilot project has also been taken up for using the thermal energy collected through flat plate collectors for generating electricity, using the conventional technology. The plant is expected to be commissioned by the end of 1977.

Technical feasibility of directly converting solar energy into electricity, using solar cells, has been established but the systems are costly and not economically viable. Work is continuing for improving technology and reducing costs.

#### **National Consumer Protection Council**

138. SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a National Consumer Protection Council in the country;

(b) if so, its activities; and

(c) whether it is having branches in the States?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES & COOPERATION (SHRI MOHAN DHARIA): (a) and (b). A decision has been taken to set up a National Consumer Protection Council to build up and foster consumer movement in the country. The activities envisaged for this apex body include tendering of advice to the Central Government on matters related to production, supplies and distribution of essential commodities; examination of consumer grievances and initiation of remedial action; bringing to the notice of the concerned agencies problems relating to trade practices or prices of specified commodities; collecting and disseminating information relating to consumer matters; assisting State Governments and Union Territories in development of the consumer movement in their areas and providing assistance, including financial assistance, to organisations and associations

formed for the welfare of the consumers.

(c) The composition of the Council is in the process of being finalised. The Council will then decide the modality of its operations including the establishment of branches.

#### **Launching of Satellite**

139. SHRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU:

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of SPACE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to launch a satellite in the near future;

(b) if so, the main feature thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is expected to be launched?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) and (c). It is proposed to launch two satellites in the near future viz., Satellite for Earth Observation which will be launched sometime in 1978 and the Rohini Satellite which will be launched in 1979.

(b) The Satellite for Earth Observation is essentially a modification of Aryabhata, having more complex payload, data handling and control system. This satellite will weigh slightly over 400 Kgs. and will carry two television cameras and microwave radiometers payloads. This would enable photography and remote sensing of gross features, which will be applicable to forestry, study of bio masses, hydrological features, etc.

The Rohini Satellite, which will be launched with the use of Indian made satellite launch vehicle, will weigh approximately 40 Kgs. This satellite will essentially carry technological payloads to monitor the performance of the launch vehicle.