

However, telecommunications services especially the teleprinter and telex services were temporarily affected in the country recently due to 'Work to-Rule' agitation by a group of telecommunication staff.

Transfer of Gas Connections in Delhi

3341. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware in regard to the hardships being experienced by the customers due to the introduction of a new system by the Indian Oil Corporation under which the customers have to deposit the cylinders with the Gas Distributors at the time of shifting their residence from one locality to another in the capital ;

(b) whether the new distributor takes his own time in supplying cylinder to the customer and in this the customer faces difficulties ; and

(c) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken in the matter to remove the hardships being faced by the customers ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHMA DUTT) : (a) to (c). Under the procedure now in vogue a customer moving from one locality to another in the same town is not required to surrender his LPG cylinder/pressure regulator. The customer can begin getting refill supplies after presentation to and registration with the new distributor of the Transfer Termination Voucher issued by the previous distributor.

Production and Import of Soda Ash

3342. SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the quantity of soda ash imported during 1984-85 and 1985-86 with details of name of country, rate of import and the total amount involved ;

(b) the agency through which the import was made, how it was distributed amongst actual users and the rate at which it was distributed ;

(c) whether Government are considering proposals to increase the production of soda ash in the country to check the import and make it available at cheaper rate ; and

(d) if so, the details therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS AND PETROCHEMICALS IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI R.K. JAICHANDRA SINGH) : (a) and (b). Imports of Soda Ash are allowed under Open General Licence (OGL) to the actual users. The importers are required to register their contracts with DGTD before effecting imports. According to the available information, the quantity of Soda Ash registered for imports with DGTD against contracts during 1984-85 and 1985-86 was as follow :

1984-85	72,390 MTs
1985-86	2,01,501 MTs

As per available information, the c.i.f. price of light Soda Ash has ranged between us \$ 110 to US \$ 155 per MT during that period. Bulgaria, Kenya, Romania and USA are the main countries from where the imports have been made.

(c) and (d). Government has recently delicensed manufacture of Soda Ash (Standard Solvey process) to increase production.

Cost of production of Cement

3343. SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the cost of production of cement in India is higher than in foreign countries ;