

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN-CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT: (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Decline in the Profitability of the Shipping Industry

2896. SHRI SHANKERSINHJI VAGHELA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Shipping Industry whose profitability has come down considerably due to world-wide recession is likely to continue to face bad days during the current year with their cash flow returns becoming smaller than before; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN-CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) On present indications, this may well happen.

(b) It is primarily for the companies concerned to adopt suitable measures to maximise their net earnings. However, depending upon the merits of each case, the Shipping Development Fund Committee has been extending various types of reliefs to deserving shipping companies.

News Item Captioned "Diseases come from Space"

2897. SHRI ANANT DAVE: Will the Minister of SPACE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen a press report which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 23rd November, 1977 to the effect that two world renowned astronomers have said that diseases and epidemics on earth actually come from space and have called for a "continual microbiological vigil of the stratosphere to eliminate the havoc which will ensue

from extra-terrestrial invasions in the future"; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Press Report is based on an article which appeared in a British journal. There are various theories in this regard many of which have yet to be verified.

Expansion of Capacities with Minimum Capital investment

2898. SHRI SHIV SAMPATI RAM: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether he had advised the industrialists to expand their capacities with minimum capital investment or utilise the existing capacities to the fullest extent; and

(b) the reaction of industrialists to this call?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. While addressing the Bombay Chamber of Commerce recently, in the context especially of the situation prevailing in the cement industry, I had advised the cement industry to expand their capacity with minimum capital investment or utilise the existing capacities to the fullest extent. This statement has been well-received.

Reconstitution of Advisory Boards of AIR Stations

2899. CHAUDHURY BRAHM PRAKASH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is determined to bring AIR and Doordarshan under autonomous corporation;