

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take to get these consumers registered with the agencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) to (d). No accurate assessment of demand for liquified petroleum gas (cooking gas) has been possible because of the other alternative fuels such as coal, soft coke, charcoal, firewood, kerosene, etc., also being used as domestic fuel. However, the present demand for new gas connections in the cities and other areas is far in excess of the availability based on current LPG production in the refineries. The availability of LPG from the refineries depends on its yield from the various crudes processed as well as the total quantity of crude available for processing. The supply of LPG is limited and not sufficient to meet the demand. It is therefore, not possible to give a gas connection as soon as it is asked for. The waiting period for getting the connection varies from place to place. While every effort is being made to increase the production and supply of LPG, this imbalance between the supply and demand will continue. However, in spite of these difficulties it has been possible for the Indian Oil Corporation Limited to release about 1.9 lakh new connections during 1976-77.

In so far as the Delhi region is concerned, substantial improvement in the supply of LPG and enrolment of customers for cooking gas will be possible only after availability of the product improves substantially around 1980.

Railway Passes for V.I.Ps.

3702. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of VIP categories of the officials or otherwise, other than Ministers of Centre/State Governments and Members of Parliament,

holding Identity cards or Passes for travelling in trains;

(b) whether it is a fact that some of the persons of these categories are given V.I.P. priority for reservation allotment of coupe, over the Members of Parliament;

(c) if so, the status of such persons;

(d) whether Government will consider the abolition of such VIP categories of officials in view of the status of Members of Parliament; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) Gazetted officers on Indian Railways perform journey by rail on duty on the authority of Metal/Card passes issued to them but they are not considered as V.I.P. categories.

(b) to (e). A small quota of a few berths on important nominated trains is earmarked at Railway Headquarters and other important stations to accommodate Central/State Ministers and High Government officials entitled to requisition rail accommodation on 'High Official Requisition'. When the quota is not utilised by those entitled to it, M.Ps., foreign tourists, Press correspondents, Government servants on duty etc., are accommodated out of the un-utilised quota. Separate quotas have been earmarked to the Reservation Office at Parliament House for allotment to the Members of Parliament, etc.

Iron Ore rakes provided to M.M.T.C. Cuttack Division

3704. SHRI PABITRA MOHAN PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state: the actual number of iron ore rakes provided to M.M.T.C., Cuttack Division from 4th September, 1974 to 7th October, 1975 and the number of rakes unloaded in siding No. I and II respectively during the aforesaid period at Atharabanki in the Paradeep Port-Area?