

for the manufacture of Dalapon. Dowpon and Dowpon S, subject to the condition that the final capacity for these item would be determined after at least 500 tonnes of the technical material were imported, formulated and marketed by the Company. For this purpose they were also granted an Industrial Licence on 24-5-1972 for making formulations of these items. However, this Industrial Licence was subject to the condition that in case their Letter of Intent for technical material was not converted into an Industrial Licence, the Industrial Licence for formulations would stand cancelled. The party's Letter of Intent for technical material was treated as lapsed on 29-3-1976 as their foreign collaboration proposals were not approved by Government. As a result, their Industrial Licence for formulations also stood cancelled from that date. However, the party continued formulation activity even after that date. M/s. IDL Agro-Chemicals were, therefore, asked to show cause as to why action should not be taken against them under Section 24 of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 for carrying on the formulation activity without a valid Industrial Licence. The explanation furnished by the party is under examination.

Fall in price of Onion

715. SHRI SHANKARRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that prices of onion have fallen to the most uneconomic level causing thereby, scare and discontent amongst onion-growers;

(b) whether Government have received representation of onion-growers from Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. requesting for giving support-price of Rs. 100 per quintal and exporting it through NAFED; and

(c) the decision taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Economic Adviser's index number of wholesale prices of onion has been showing a declining trend since January, 80. The index has gone down from 600.4 in January, 80 to 297.8 on 16-2-80. At this level it is higher by 71.8 percent as compared to the corresponding index of 173.3 last year.

(b) and (c). Several representations have been received from Maharashtra and Gujarat regarding the steep fall in the prices of onion, requesting purchases and export through NAFED as also for fixation of support prices of onion at levels much higher than the support price announced by the Government for 1979-80 season. So far Government have not taken any decision in the matter.

Plan to bring down the Demand and Supply of Petroleum Products

716. SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been planned to bring down the demand and supply of petroleum products within the coming two years by 5 per cent in our country without affecting industrial and agricultural production by short term measures; and

(b) if so, the short term measures proposed and adopted?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Construction of Houses at Rankhet (U.P.)

717. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of WORKS AND HOUSING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to

construct houses at Ranikhet for the middle and lower income group people; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the construction work of these houses is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND HOUSING (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) and (b). Housing is in the State Sector. The matter is, therefore, for the State Government to decide. Central financial assistance is given to the States in the shape of 'block loans' and 'block grants' for implementing various Plan schemes including social housing schemes intended to benefit also the middle and low income people.

Scientists' Conference at Calcutta regarding Oil Resources

718. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the warning by the last Scientists' Conference held at Calcutta that the oil resources of India will be dried up during this century;

(b) if so whether there is any proposal for seeking alternative sources of energy; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) Government does not share such a view.

(b) The possibility of developing alternative sources of energy is being pursued.

(c) The work being done includes—

(i) experiments for converting coal to oil.

(ii) use of Methyl Alcohol or Ethyl Alcohol fully or partly to replace motor gasoline.

(iii) development of Solar Thermal devices and systems using solar radiation as input energy.

(iv) development of Photovoltaic devices and systems for direct conversion of solar energy into electricity; and

(v) conversion of bio-mass into energy.

Food Production

719. SHRI K. MALLANNA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of food production during the 1979-80 despite the unprecedented drought affecting a number of districts in the country;

(b) if so, the details regarding the food output, State-wise; and

(c) whether there has been marginal shortfall in the Kharif jowar production last year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) and (b). Firm estimates of foodgrain production during 1979-80 would become available only after the close of the agricultural year, i.e., sometime in July-August 1980. On account of unprecedented drought in large parts of the country, fall in production of kharif foodgrains as a whole is broadly assessed at about 12 million tonnes compared to peak level production of 78.7 million tonnes during 1978-79. It is too early to give any precise idea about the size of rabi production.

(c) Production of kharif jowar in the country marked a decline from 8.89 million tonnes in 1977-78 to 8.10