

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