

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Government earned Rs. 680.41 crores during 1973-74 and Rs. 651.10 crores during the first 9 months ending December, 1974, the month upto which the Accounts have been closed.

(b) and (c). A station to station rate has been quoted for M/s. Hyderabad Asbestos Cement Products Ltd., for transport of asbestos refined in wagonloads from stations on Bombay Port Trust Railway and Wadibunder to their siding at Sanatnagar, Hyderabad. The station to station rate, which involves a reduction of about 15 per cent in the normal tariff rate, has been quoted with a view to attracting traffic from Road to Rail.

Development of Alternate Sources for West Asian Oil

200. SHRI VARKEY GEOFFGE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the only long term solution for the global energy crisis was the development of alternate sources for West Asian Oil;

(b) if so, whether our scientists have so far developed any alternative source for India's own requirements; and

(c) if so, to what extent?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI):

(a) The solution for the energy crisis lies in increasing the indigenous production of crude oil and placing greater reliance on other sources of energy and feedstocks.

(b) and (c). It has been recognised that coal could be the prime source of energy as an alternative fuel to reduce the country's dependence on oil imports. With this end in view, a

number of research and other projects are under consideration/implementation such as

(i) the Government have recently set up an expert group to consider the technology of conversion of coal into oil; and

(ii) a number of low temperature carbonisation coal gas plants are under consideration.

Starting Industries based on Natural Gas in Tripura

201. SHRI DASARATHA DEB: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are having any proposal to start some industries in Tripura based on natural gas which is available in plenty there;

(b) if so, the broad outlines thereof; and

(c) whether the Tripura Government has submitted any proposal in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI): (a) and (b). A few gas horizons have been encountered in the first well drilled at Baramura structure in Tripura. It is only after the discovery is proved to be commercial that the question of its utilisation can be considered.

(c) No proposal has been received by the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemicals from the Tripura Government.