

sion of the existing rate of royalty is under consideration and a decision will be taken as soon as possible.

**Setting up of Regional Office of ONGC in Andhra Pradesh**

494. SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state :

(a) the conclusion drawn after conducting offshore drilling operations by Oil and Natural Gas Commission extensively in the coastal Andhra Districts;

(b) whether a task force has been set up by ONGC to go into the details regarding utilisation of natural gas;

(c) if so, the details of its recommendations; and

(d) whether Government propose to set up a Regional Office of ONGC in Andhra Pradesh to expedite the drilling operations with utmost efficiency ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM (SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA :

(a) Gas has been discovered in onshore areas and oil and gas in offshore areas in deep waters. The basin is considered prospective but commercial quantities of hydrocarbons are yet to be established.

(b) and (c) : Yes, Sir. The task force has recommended that various fractions of natural gas be used for production of fertilizers, petro-chemicals and liquid petroleum gas.

(d) The existing office at Rajahmundry has been controlling the onshore operations in Krishna-Godavari Basin since July, 1977. It is proposed to be strengthened further. An offshore supply base has been set up at Visakhapatnam port and a helicopter base at Vijayawada airport.

**S.T.D., Telex and Auto-Exchange Facilities in Bidar, Karnataka**

495. SHRI NARSINGHRAO SURYA WANSHI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether STD, Telex and Auto-exchange facilities are scanty in Bidar; Karnataka;

(b) whether Government are proposing for their expansion; and

(c) if so, the time by which these will be expanded ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) At present an automatic exchange of 600 lines is working at Bidar with a waiting list of 208 lines. However, STD and Telex facilities are not available at Bidar.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) *Auto Exchange* :

Present capacity of 600 lines of auto exchange is planned to be expanded progressively during the 7th plan period.

*S.T.D.* : Bidar is likely to be provided with STD facilities during the 7th plan period after the reliable transmission medium linking Bidar with Hyderabad is commissioned.

*Telex* : A 20 line telex exchange has been planned for Bidar during the 7th plan period.

Party Position in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies etc.

496 DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :