

Priority to Agriculture and Power Generation for Assam in the Five Year Plan

*245. SHRI MANPHOOL SINGH CHAUDHARY: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission had proposed to accord priority to agriculture and power generation for the Five Year Plan for 1980—85 for Assam; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PLANNING (SHRI N. D. TEWARI): (a) and (b) The Five Year Plan 1980—85 Draft document is yet to be received from the State Government of Assam. However, in the guidelines issued to the State Governments by the Planning Commission it has been emphasised to accord priority to the key sectors of development including agriculture and power generation.

Research and Development in Hydrogen Production and Liquefaction of Coal

*246. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

SHRI S. M. KRISHNA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need for high priority research and development in hydrogen production and liquefaction of coal; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken in this respect?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-MATI INDIRA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Department of Science and Technology has constituted a Hydrogen Energy Task Force for identifying research and development (R and D) activity to be carried out at national level covering production,

storage and utilisation of hydrogen. Programmes in this area are currently underway at IIT (Madras), IIT (Delhi) and other institutions. The R and D programme is being further expanded.

The Central Fuel Research Institute of CSIR has for sometime been working on aspects relating to the liquefaction of coal. A half-ton per day pilot plant for conversion of coal to oil, by hydrogenation under pressure, is in operation at the Institute. The feasibility of installing a large size coal liquenfaction plant is being examined in the light of recent developments in technology and escalation in oil prices.

Meeting of Opposition Leaders with P.M. on Assam Issue

*247. PROF. MADHU DANDA-VATE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the representative of the Janata Party, the Bharatia Janata Party, Lok Dal, DMK and AIDMK did not attend the opposition parties meeting with the Prime Minister at Delhi on the 31st May, 1980 to discuss the Assam issue;

(b) if so, whether any of these parties had written to the Prime Minister regarding the reasons of their not attending the meeting; and

(c) if so, the reasons stated in their letter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party, Lok Dal and Janata Party (JP) had written letters to the Prime Minister on 31st May 1980 giving reasons for their not attending the meeting.