

(b) in view of this, whether Government would set up Vitamin 'C' plants under public sector;

(c) if so, the broad features thereof;

(d) whether Government would take over these foreign owned units of Vitamin 'C' in accordance with the recommendations of Hathi Committee; and

(e) if so, the facts thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) to (e). M/s. Sarabhai M. Chemicals were operating in collaboration with M/s. Merck A. G., West Germany. The German Company held 26 per cent of the equity capital in the Indian company. The agreement was terminated on 15th July, 1969 and M/s. Sarabhai M. Chemicals became wholly Indian. Sarabhai M. Chemicals is presently licensed for the manufacture of Vitamin C with a capacity of 120 tonnes per annum as against total licensed capacity of 387.50 tonnes per annum for Vitamin C and its salts. Their production during 1974 was 233 tonnes as against total production of 255 tonnes in the country

M/s. Hindustan Antibiotics Limited, a public sector unit is already licensed to produce Vitamin C with a capacity of 125 tonnes per annum. They propose to expand to 250 tonnes during the Fifth Plan Period. In addition, M/s. Jayant Vitamins Ltd. hold a licence for manufacture of 142.5 tonnes of Vitamin C and its salts issued to them on 12th September 1972. This company has gone into production in 1974. A letter of intent is also held by Shri D. R. Gandhi for manufacture of 150 tonnes of Vitamin C granted to the party on 17th August 1973.

#### **Ban on New Gas Connections**

\*829. SHRI PRABODH CHANDRA·  
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM

AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have put any ban at present for issue of new gas connections;

(b) if so, whether persons have to wait for years to get the gas connection after registration; and

(c) if so, the remedial measures proposed to ease the position?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI C. P. MAJHI): (a) No such ban has been placed by the Government but the Oil Companies are advised not to enrol new customers in any market unless increased supply of gas can be maintained to meet additional requirements on a sustained basis. The demand from the existing customers of Burmah Shell, Caltex and H.P.C. is already adequate considering the total LPG availability from their refineries. As such, these companies enrol new customers only when there is some rearrangement of markets and they can ensure supply of gas to the new customers on a sustained basis. IOC continues to enrol new customers in markets where additional gas can be made available and open new markets where it has plans to develop the facility. Government has however advised the IOC to place a limit on the number of customers booked by each individual dealer.

(b) The present demand of LPG is far in excess of the production and marketing facilities of the oil Companies. As a result people have to wait in many places for a considerable period to get a new gas connection.

(c) Regarding steps proposed to be taken to end the shortage of cooking gas in the country, reply given to Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2127 on 4th March 1975 may kindly be referred to.