

tion is increased by tubewells and that greater emphasis is laid on rural development, may I know why these plans are being delayed?

PROF. SIDDHESWAR PRASAD: There is no question of delay. Gujarat is really above the all-India average for rural electrification. As far as the target of achieving hundred per cent rural electrification is concerned, recently at a meeting of the Chairmen of the State Electricity Boards it was decided that all the State Electricity Boards should be asked to draw up such plans. The Central Electricity Authority has taken up the matter with the State Electricity Boards and they have been asked to Submit a report by the end of this month.

SHRI D. D. DESAI: Although the hon. Minister has stated that there is no reason for delay or that there are no actual plans for delay, I believe that the only constraint could be finance. Here also, you will find that there has been surplus in some portfolios in certain years, and if there is better co-ordination, these funds can be diverted in directions where there is better utilisation and where the return is higher than borrowing rate of the Government.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should await the report. He says the report will be available in a month. That will deal with all these aspects.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: May I know when this plan for hundred per cent rural electrification not only in Gujarat but in various other parts of the country will be implemented, and whether inadequate Central assistance for this purpose is also responsible for the slackness, particularly in areas where electrification is most needed because of industrialisation etc. My own district of Ahmedabad, I was shocked to hear at a meeting only two weeks ago, is still not hundred per cent electrified simply because there is no plan and there are no adequate funds from the Centre.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI K. C. PANT): Rural electrification was previously entirely the responsibility of the State Governments, it had nothing to do with the Centre, but the Rural Electrification Corporation was set up so as to assist in the rural electrification programme. So, whatever perspective plan the State draws up, it will have to take into account the expenditure that it is itself prepared to incur on this programme, and not rely entirely on the Centre. As my hon. friend knows, the State Plan is drawn up by taking Central assistance into account as a lock. There is no earmarking for rural electrification as such in the State Plan. So, unless the State Government is anxious to see that more money is diverted to rural electrification, there is very little that we can do in the matter. So, their interest in this matter is necessary in order to speed up rural electrification.

Computer Technology

*30 **SHRI RAJA KULKARNI:** Will the Minister of ELECTRONICS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved a comprehensive national policy on computer technology; and

(b) if so, the progress made by Electronics Commission in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI K. C. PANT) (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) The Electronics Commission has laid down policies with regard to various aspects of computer technology such as, imports, industrial licensing, priority areas for use of computers, technology development, software exports, and the manufacturing programmes of foreign companies. The nature of these policies have been set down in some detail in Sec-

tion 9 of the Annual Report of the Department of Electronics for 1975-76.

(b): The following are some of the significant policy decisions and actions taken in this regard by the Electronics Commission:

- (i) The Department of Electronics has been made responsible as the nodal Ministry of Government for coordinating the requirements of all users in the country relating to electronic data processing equipment and all matters concerning computer-based information systems and technology.
- (ii) Policies and administrative procedures for import of computers above the value of Rs. 5 lakhs, have been laid down.
- (iii) The configurations of computer systems for priority sectors such as Defence, Oil, Agriculture, Steel, Atomic Energy, Planning, Industrial Production and Regional Computer Centres for specific applications as indicated by the users have been defined and clearances for import given.
- (iv) Programmes for the import of computers for export of software on the basis of guarantees, and by Indian nationals returning from/residing abroad, have been implemented.
- (v) Action regarding issue of industrial licences for programmable calculators, mini-computer peripherals, micro-processor-based telecommunication systems and cash registers, and limited industrial licences for mini-computers has been taken; this is a continuing process.

(vi) Supply of computers by foreign computer companies operating here on the basis of refurbishing of used machines imported on an 'AS IS' basis, has been terminated.

(vii) The programmes of foreign computer companies operating in India have been examined under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act and recommendations made for reduction of foreign equity to 40 per cent or discontinuance of all their current activities classified as trading, marketing, operation of data centres etc.

(viii) Technology development contracts amounting in money terms to about Rs 3 crores for the development of computer hardware and software, have been given to public sector companies.

(ix) With assistance from United National Development Programme, a National Centre for Software Development and Computing Techniques has been set up at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay. A National Informatics Centre has been approved for implementation at New Delhi. A Regional Computer Centre at Calcutta is being set up.

SHRI RAJA KULKARNI: It is good that a public policy has now come up on various aspects of computer technology imports industrial licensing priority areas, technology development and the manufacturing programmes of the foreign companies operating in India. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the report of the Public Accounts Committee where in the working of computers in more than a dozen government departments has given, and under-utilisation has been

found, Is the Government thinking of appointing an expert panel to probe into capacity utilisation of computers and electronic data processing machines used in various government departments and public sector corporations? ..

SHRI K. C. PANT: If my hon. friend has gone through the statement which I have given, he will see that the Electronics Commission does look into this matter as to what is the capacity available, what are the particular uses of the consumers, and where can pooling be done for the benefit of all government departments located in an area. All these things are definitely looked into the Electronics Commission.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTION

Poverty Conditions in India

*24. **SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:** Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 1325 on the 28th January, 1976 regarding poverty conditions in India and state the number and proportion of population below poverty line in the urban and rural areas, separately, as in 1973, 1974 and 1975?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI SANKAR GHOSE): No fresh information has become available since the reply was given to the Unstarred Question No. 1325 on the 28th January 1976.

Accumulation of Coal at Pit Heads due to fall in quality

*31. **SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAUDHARY:** Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is accumulation of coal at pit heads and consequential reduction in production target by

ten million tonnes because of fall in quality;

(b) whether complaints have been received regarding supply of coal, specially from M.P. coal fields; and

(c) if so, steps taken to improve the quality?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI K. C. PANT) (a) No, Sir. The accumulation of pit head stocks is due to the demand for coal being below the anticipated level and not due to any fall in quality. The demand for coal by the end of 5th Five Year Plan is now estimated at about 124 million tonnes as against the earlier estimate of 135 million tonnes.

(b) Some complaints have been received from time to time from the consumers regarding supply of inferior quality of coal by the coal producing agencies including those supplying coal from M. P. Coalfields.

(c) Several steps are being taken by coal producing organisations including introduction of screening and sizing arrangements, joint sampling, setting up quality control Departments, Complaint Cells, introduction of contracts with Bonus-cum-Penalty clause, posting of inspectors at the loading points etc so as to ensure the supply of the required quality of coal to consumers. Besides, this, a committee has also been set up to go into the question of quality of coal supplied by the collieries which will make recommendations regarding the steps to be taken for the production and supply of suitable coal to the consumers.

Hydro-Electric Potentials in Chakra and Varahi Rivers

*32. **SHRI P. R. SHENOY:** Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Chakra and Varahi rivers in Karnataka are having hydro-electric potential; and