

(b) if so, the names of States exchanging Cultural troupes this year; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE (SHRI D. P. YADAVA) : (a) to (c). The scheme was discontinued from 1-4-69, in the overall interest of economy. There is no proposal at present for reviving the scheme.

Steamer Service between Cochin and Bombay

*1187. SHRI B. V. NAIK : Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the alternative arrangements that have been made for the transport of passengers stranded by the cessation of coastal steamer service between Cochin and Bombay ;

(b) whether during May and June 1971, passengers travelling to Bombay on the West Coast were put to hardship because of cessation of sea transport ; and

(c) whether Government would permit a sea taxi service in this area to facilitate the common man to travel ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR) : (a) No shipping company is willing to restart the passenger-cum-cargo service between Bombay and Cochin which closed down in June 1969, for lack of adequate cargo and passengers, among other reasons. It is also reported that there has been no stranding of passengers due to discontinuance of the service and alternative forms of transport are available.

(b) No Sir, Even when the service was in operation, it was the practice to suspend it from middle of May to middle of September on account of monsoon.

(c) No proposal has been received by Government for operating a sea-taxi service in the area, and the question of granting permission does not hence arise.

Formation of a Company for the Execution of Shipyard Project at Cochin

*1188. SHRI M. K. KRISHNAN : Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the formation of a Company for the execution of the proposed Shipyard project at Cochin has not yet been done ;

(b) if so, the reasons for the same ; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR) : (a) to (c). Necessary action for the formation of a Company for the execution of the Cochin Shipyard Project has already been taken, and it is expected to be completed shortly.

Taking over of O.C.M. (India) Pvt. Ltd.

*1189. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 619 on the 28th May, 1971 and state :

(a) whether the 31 parties to whom 25,000 shares of O.C.M. (India) Private Ltd. are proposed to be sold include, besides Shree Digvijay Woollen Mills Ltd., several subsidiary and selling agency firms owned or controlled by the Birla Group ;

(b) whether O.C.M. is supplying blankets, battle-dresses, etc. for our Defence Force ; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to take over the company, instead of allowing it to pass from a foreign owner to the Birlas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the last 4 years only two orders for supplies worth Rs. 10.6 lakhs were placed with the company.

(c) Does not arise in view of the fact that the proposed sale has been disallowed by