

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Setting up of Mini Cement Plants

***25. SHRI CHITTUBHAI SAMIT:**

SHRI SARAT KAR:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps for encouraging entrepreneurs to set up mini-cement plants in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details regarding the policy of Government while sanctioning the quota to the States?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a): Yes, Sir.

(b) No State-wise quota for mini-cement plants is under consideration.

Use of Alcohol as Fuel

***26. SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR:** Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in the use of alcohol as fuel for internal combustion engines;

(b) the advances made in this direction in foreign countries; and

(c) the reasons why similar steps have not been taken in India in the interests of petrol conservation?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): (a) to (c). A statement giving the required information is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

It is known that alcohol blended with petrol upto 20 per cent can be used for internal combustion engine without significant changes in engine design. Whilst many countries are engaged in

exploratory work in this field, Philippines and Brazil have embarked on major programme for large scale use of Ethyl alcohol mixed with petrol for internal combustion engine in transportation system. The alcohol for this is produced by fermentation using sugar cane/and/or molasses. If alcohol alone is to be used as fuel for engines (without mixing petrol) the engine design would require substantial modification. Research and development work on this is in progress, at several technological institutions in India.

The only cost-competitive method of producing alcohol for this purpose is through fermentation, at present primarily based on cane sugar/molasses. For this it would become necessary to use fertile agricultural land and substantial quantity of water for cane growing for alcohol production which throws up important policy questions pertaining to land use between energy plantations and food crops. Need therefore exists to develop technology for production of alcohol using agricultural residues as raw material e.g. cotton wastes, bagasse, rice husk and forest wastes. Experimental work on this is in progress in India and a National Steering Committee exists to examine these issues in detail.

Shortage of wool for carpet Industry

***27. SHRI KUMARI ANATHAN:** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the hand-knitted carpet industry is in the grip of a severe crisis due to shortage of wool; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken to supply adequate quantities of wool to the country's carpet industry which has so far been a growing export business?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a). Although there is no severe crisis as such, yet the industry has been facing some shortage of raw wool.