

(d) whether all such moves would be shelved on account of economy drive ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Post Offices are shifted from one rented building to another rented building taking into consideration various factors such as operational requirements, inadequacy of the present accommodation, persistent demands from the landlords for vacation of the building ; etc.

(c) This information in respect of each Postal Division of Himachal Pradesh is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) No, Sir. Each case will be considered on its merits.

Setting up of Pilot Project for obtaining Fuel from Coal

4713. SHRI P. R. KUMARAMANGALAM : Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether underground coal fires are still raging in our coal mines and reducing our mineral wealth and if so, details thereof and measures taken/proposed indicating estimated losses suffered so far ;

(b) whether a Committee set up under Sir J.C. Ghosh in 1954, had recommended setting up of a pilot project for obtaining fuel from coal as has been done in West Germany and if so, progress made so far ; and

(c) whether the project has not made any progress due to consideration of cost price calculations of the fuel oil on the lines of discontinuation of alcohol in petrol after the Second World War ?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT STATE) : (a) 84 fires are repor-

ted to be active at present in underground coal mines in the country. Fires have been active since the beginning of the century. In Jharia coalfield alone a loss of 36 million tonnes of coal has been estimated due to fires. Projects covering 65 fires in various coal companies are under implementation. Projects are being prepared to cover the remaining fires.

(b) The Ghosh Committee (1956) made a proposal for setting up of plants for the production of synthetic liquid fuel from coal.

(c) In general it can be said that the economics of coal to oil conversion is not favourable.

LPG Facility to Port Blair

4714. SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government had earlier decided to provide Indane LPG gas to all district headquarters including Port Blair, the capital of Andaman & Nicobar Islands ;

(b) if so, the reasons why this facility has not been extended to Port Blair so far ; and

(c) when his Ministry proposes to extend the facility to Port Blair ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : (a) to (c). The Oil marketing companies have been advised to accord priority in providing LPG facilities to district Headquarters subject to economic viability. The Andaman & Nicobar Administration and the Indian Oil Corporation are exploring the feasibility of LPG marketing at Port Blair, keeping in view the relevant aspects like transportation arrangements, costs, infrastructural requirements etc.