

(b) what steps Government propose to take to increase the supply of cooking gas in the country;

(c) is it a fact that in Delhi people are not getting the cooking gas since long; and

(d) if yes, how many applications are still pending and since when?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA):

(a) It has not been possible to accurately assess the demand for liquefied petroleum gas (cooking gas) in the country because of the various other alternative fuels also being used as domestic fuel. However, an index called Thompson Index which is based on a number of economic indicators has been used for determining the demand potential of liquefied petroleum gas in different parts of the country. According to the assessment based on the said index, the current demand potential for LPG is estimated to be of the order of 8.6 lakh tonnes per annum as against the present availability of cooking gas of about 4.2 lakh tonnes per annum.

(b) The LPG availability in the country is expected to increase substantially by 1980-81 by the commissioning of:

(i) Facilities for separation of LPG from the Bombay High Associated Gas;

(ii) The Mathura Refinery;

(iii) Secondary processing facilities at Koyali Refinery; and

(iv) Coker Unit of the Bongai-gaon Refinery.

(c) Cylinder refill requirements of existing cooking gas customers are generally met in full. The present demand for cooking gas, however, is far in excess of the availability of the product from the refineries. Hence a large number of people are waiting

for a long time for getting a new gas connection.

(d) Approximately, 2,76,000 persons are on the waiting list of the gas distributors of the various oil companies in Delhi. The period for waiting differs from area to area in Delhi and the longest the people are waiting is from 1972.

A.I.R. and Doordarshan programmes.

3175. SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even now there is no basic change in the policy adopted by All India Radio and Television and much time is devoted either on the film songs or movies etc.;

(b) whether it is also a fact that very little time is devoted by A.I.R. and Doordarshan to educate the people about old Indian culture, civilization and Indian art;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) what steps Government propose to take to educate the people so that they may understand their culture well; and

(e) how much time is devoted by All India Radio and Doordarshan for inculcating the patriotic feelings among the people and particularly the youngsters?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) No, Sir. Government's programme policy is to reduce dependence on films and film music. On the primary service of A.I.R., the quantum of film music is limited to 5-6 per cent of the total programme time. On the Vividh Bharati/Commercial Service, music occupies 90 per cent of the time out of

which about 80 per cent is film music as against 90 per cent about 3½ years back. A.I.R. Commercial Service is limited to only 15 per cent of the population. On Doordarshan, Indian feature films/film based programme and foreign films constitute about 20 per cent of the total programme. Steps have been taken by AIR to apply stricter standards in the screening of film songs and to produce high quality light music songs at AIR stations themselves.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e). AIR has been broadcasting various programmes in different formats enabling the listeners to understand their culture, history and heritage. As regards Doordarshan, its programming is primarily Indian in character with very little foreign element. Besides, considerable number of programmes inculcating patriotic feelings are telecast.

High Costs of Medicines and Drugs

3176. SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) are Government aware of the fact that many items of medicines and drugs are costlier in India;

(b) have Government made a study of this problem in the last one year;

(c) what specific steps Government propose to take to make the medicines cheaper;

(d) do Government propose to set up any drug unit in India for manufacturing medicines etc; and

(e) if so, give the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Prices of medicines are generally lower in India than in several other

countries although in some cases, the price could be higher.

(b) A study of our prices in relation to prices in UK has been made. A comparative statement showing prices of certain branded medicines in India and UK is attached. It would be seen that the prices in India are lower than prices of the same medicines in UK, which has among the lowest prices in western Europe.

(c) The New Pricing Policy has the following features, which are expected to contain or bring down the prices of drugs:—

I (i) All the bulk drugs which would go into price controlled formulations will be subject to price control. Under the existing Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1970, only in respect of 'Essential Bulk Drugs' covered under the paragraph 4 thereof, Government have the powers to fix the prices after conducting such inquiry as deemed fit. In the case of other bulk drugs, the manufacturers are required to obtain approval of Government only when increasing the prices thereof.

(ii) The Scheme of graded mark ups (Providing for 40 per cent for category I, 55 per cent for category II, and mark up upto 100 per cent for category-III and exemption from price control for category-IV formulations) under the New Pricing Policy is expected to make available essential and life saving drugs to the consumers at fair and reasonable prices, while ensuring on an overall basis, a fair return to the manufacturers.

II. Recently in the budget proposals for the year 1979-80 additional excise duty of 5 per cent of basic rate of duty of excise which was levied w.e.f. 1st of March, 1978 on patent or proprietary medicines has been withdrawn. We have already issued instructions to the manufacturers to bring down the prices of patent or proprietary formulations classifiable