

Complaints of shortage of Wagons for Soda Ash Plants located in Saurashtra

2927. SHRI S. R. DAMANI:
DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether complaints of shortage of wagons have been received from the Soda Ash Plants located in Saurashtra;

(b) what are their requirements and what is actually made available to them in the last six months; and

(c) the reasons for short supply and when the full requirements will be met to clear the accumulated stocks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) Yes, Complaints have been received from M/s. Tata and Saurashtra Chemicals.

(b) and (c). During the period from January to June 1974, 8,714 metre gauge wagons were loaded as against net demands for 9,854 wagons.

Consistent with the commitments of the Railways to clear traffic in higher priorities preferentially, every endeavour is being made to ensure adequate movement of soda ash from these factories. As a matter of fact, loading was stepped up in July 1974, and 1,774 metre gauge wagons were loaded in that month as against a monthly average loading of 1,452 wagons during January to June 1974.

Furnace Oil supplied to Power Houses by I.O.C.

2928. SHRI S. R. DAMANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of furnace oil supplied to power houses by the I.O.C. is such as might cause opera-

tional hazards affecting loss of efficiency;

(b) if so, whether the causes thereof have been investigated; and

(c) the steps taken to supply right quality oil to power houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAH NIWAZ KHAN): (a) No, Sir. But in certain power houses in the Eastern region, the high viscosity of furnace oil caused some operational problems, and until the necessary modifications are made, the supply of low viscosity oil has been arranged.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Cut in Allocation of Foreign Exchange for Import of Crude

2929. SHRI S R. DAMANI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided on severe cuts in the allocation of foreign exchange for import of crude in the current year; and

(b) if so, how it is going to affect the refining capacity and the demand and supply position of petroleum products in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAH NAWAZ KHAN): (a) and (b). As a result of the steep increase in crude oil prices since October 1973 and further steep increase since January 1974 foreign exchange cost of crude imports to meet the demand of petroleum products in the country has enormously increased. The problem at present is not of availability of crude oil but of meeting the high foreign exchange cost of crude oil imports. Taking into account the foreign exchange availability position the foreign exchange out go for the import of crude oil and other petroleum products during the current financial year will be about