

[Shri R. K. Malgi]

made by the state government were over and above the ceiling filed by the planning commission and were in fact made for restoration of funds to the depreciation reserve fund. The state government has already pointed out to the Government of India how this view is directly in conflict with the view held by the Planning Commission in this regard. This issue was also taken up with the Minister of Railways and as desired by him certain information required by the Planning Commission to take a decision has already been forwarded to the Commission.

The central government, Ministry of Railways should therefore, immediately see that the arrears of capital contribution of the order of Rs. 350 lakhs be cleared to the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation before the close of the current financial year, that is 31st March, 1979. Since the hon. Minister is in the House, I should like him to make a statement on my 377.

(iii) SHORTAGE OF WAGONS FOR TRANSPORTING SALT

SHRI VASANT SATHE (Akola): It is reported in the Sunday Standard, Bombay dated 4-3-1979 that salt merchants along the western railway are facing a crippling shortage of railway wagons for transporting their products to consuming centres in various parts of the country and as a result the piles of salt packed in gunny bags are lying along the wharves. In February for example less than half the demands for wagons made by the traders and manufacturers was met by the western railway authorities. In fact the backlog of unmet demands has increased to one month. This is happening despite the fact that the zonal quota on a monthly basis has been fixed by the government salt department. The situation is getting critical and there is every possibility of shortage of salt at the consuming centres. Shri Dandavate is here and he can make a note.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS  
PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I am listening to what you say very carefully.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: In view of the above I urge upon the government to take immediate action in the matter and ensure that adequate numbers of wagons are provided to meet the situation. I hope the Minister will not become namak haram.

(iv) SETTING UP OF A PETRO-CHEMICAL COMPLEX IN KERALA

SHRI K. A. RAJAN (Trichur): The Cochin refinery had submitted to the central government a proposal to instal a secondary procuring facility in the refinery for the conversion of the furnace oil into LPG and diesel oil. After the implementation of this facility the refinery can process hundred per cent Bombay High crude or imported crude or a mixture of Bombay High and imported crude. This project is estimated to cost Rs. 30 crores. It is highly remunerative also.

Once the proposed secondary processing facility is installed high octane value petroleum could be available with the coming up of the above mentioned catalytic cracking unit the entire straight run naphtha will be available for fertiliser and petrochemical production and the catalytic reformer and the naphtha desulphurication units will be available for more productive use for making valuable aromatics. In view of the above it is proposed a new aromatic complex should be set up, based on the naphtha available from the Cochin refinery and using the catalytic reformer and naphtha desulphurication mentioned above.

The Kerala Chief Minister had written to the Union Petroleum Minister forwarding a copy of the scheme and requesting for starting an aromatic complex in Kerala. The State government has also offered to invest Rs. 25 crores for down-stream project. Now pre-