

now planned for the Godavari off-shore commence.

### Ban on Import of Soda Ash

\*339. SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that soda ash is abundantly available in the country;

(b) if so, what are the salient reasons for resorting to its import;

(c) whether the import of soda ash is proposed to be banned in the larger interests of small scale industries; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) Soda Ash was in short supply in 1978, 1979 and early 1980. As a result of the various measures taken by the Government the availability position of soda ash has become very comfortable.

(b) In order to augment the availability, import of Soda Ash was placed under Open General Licence (OGL) with effect from 14-1-1979.

(c) and (d). The manufacturers of soda ash have represented that, as on 31-10-1981 the stocks of unsold soda ash were about 81,690 tonnes as compared to 17,053 tonnes at the end of January, 1981. The manufacturers have been representing that because of large scale imports and poor off-take, stocks are accumulating and that, unless imports are banned, the industry would be badly affected. However, consumers' associations like the All India Glass Manufacturers' Federation and the All India Silicate Manufacturers' Association are pleading for the continuance of the present import policy. They contend that indigenous production of soda ash may fall short of the demand in the country. No decision has been taken by the Government on the representations. The import policy is constantly

under review. Imports are regulated taking into account demand and indigenous availability.

### Limit on Capital of Companies for Reference to MRTP Commission

\*342. SHRI ARUN KUMAR NEHRU: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to raise the limit of Rs. 20 crores on capital of companies for cases to be referred to the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission;

(b) if so, the amount of such increase proposed; and

(c) the reasons for doing this?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) to (c). The High Powered Expert Committee (Sachar Committee), which was appointed by Government to consider and report as to what changes were necessary in the M.R.T.P. Act, 1969, and Companies Act, 1956, has in its report submitted to Government, not recommended for any increase in the existing monetary ceilings of assets for the purpose. The Committee's recommendations in this regard and also in respect of other amendments to the M.R.T.P. Act are at present under active consideration of the Government at the highest level. Necessary legislation will be initiated as soon as the decisions are arrived at.

### क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में प्रकाशित होने वाले छोटे समाचार-पत्रों को प्रोत्साहन

\* 343. श्री मूल चन्द डागा : क्या सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री यह बताने की क्षमता करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार का प्रस्ताव है कि क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में प्रकाशित होने वाले छोटे समाचार-पत्रों को, जिन्हें गांवों में