

that the total imports of crude oil and petroleum products during the financial year 1979-80 would be of the following order:—

Crude Oil . 17 million tonnes

Petroleum Products 5.2 million tonnes

(b) As against the original estimates of Rs. 3067.90 crores of foreign exchange involved, the revised requirements of foreign exchange are likely to be of the order of Rs. 3712.11 crores.

(c) Presently the Oil Industry is incurring an estimated loss of nearly Rs. 4.5 crores per day from 1.1.1980 and the increased burden is being made good by drawing loans from Commercial Banks with the sanction of Reserve Bank of India. The additional burden on the economy is very heavy.

Scheme to reduce consumption of petrol

100. SHRI KISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the uncertain availability of crude oil, Government have formulated any scheme to reduce the consumption of petrol by (i) Government offices, (ii) affluent people, and (iii) the general public;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether Government propose to increase production of petroleum and explore new sources of energy in the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) and (b) The attention of the Union Ministries/Departments and the State Governments/Union Territory Administration has been drawn to the steep increase in the consumption of petrol and they

have been requested to take necessary steps for achieving a saving of 15 per cent in the consumption of petrol during 1979-80 over that of 1978-79 in respect of the departments, public sector undertakings, etc., coming within their control. In the case of others, reduction in the consumption of motor spirit (petrol) is expected to be achieved mainly through price increases.

(c) All efforts are being made to maximise availability of indigenous crude oil. Besides, the question of blending alcohol with petrol is also being actively pursued. The Department of Science and Technology is implementing plans for exploring alternative sources of energy.

Increase in the prices of petroleum products

101. SHRI KISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to increase the prices of petrol and other petroleum products;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government also propose to curb the consumption of petroleum products for non-essential purposes and also propose to ration petrol; if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) Successive and steep increases in the prices of imported crude oil and petroleum products from the last quarter of 1979 has led to a phenomenal increase in the import bill. Increases in the domestic prices of petroleum products are not ruled out.

(b) It is not in the public interest to divulge any details at this stage.