

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Agence France Presse in a report from Gangtok (Sikkim) dated 24th February, 1962, stated that 20 Russian type tanks manufactured in People's China rolled out of Lhasa for an unknown destination. The report further said that it was thought that these tanks were despatched to the Ladakh region.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Press Trust of India being the distribution agents of Agence France Presse within India, released the item to the Indian Press on their behalf.

(c) When the attention of the Ministry of External Affairs was drawn to the report, the official spokesman, at his press briefing, pointed out the obviously ridiculous nature of the report and said that commonsense would suggest that no tank could undertake a journey of nearly 2,000 miles through rugged and difficult terrain without completely wearing itself out. This statement had the desired effect in killing the story. Opportunity was also taken to impress on the Agence France Presse representative in Delhi the need to check on all such stories with official sources before putting them out.

EXPENDITURE ON REPAIRS TO AND DECORATION OF MINISTERS' HOUSES

*354. SHRI A. M. TARIQ: Will the Minister of WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY be pleased to furnish details of expenditure incurred by Government on the houses of Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of States and Deputy Ministers for decorations and repairs from 1957 to-date?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA) : The required information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

SHORTAGE OF GOVERNMENT ACCOMMODATION FOR GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

*355. SHRI A. M. TARIQ: Will the Minister of WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a large number of Government servants who are entitled to Government accommodation and have not been allotted any Government accommodation; and

(b) if so, what action Government is taking in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY (SHRI MEHR CHAND KHANNA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A programme of construction of residences on a large scale is being worked out, for implementation in the next few years.

PETRO-CHEMICALS COMMITTEE

*356. SHRI BABUBHAI CHINAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Petro-Chemicals Committee appointed by Government has submitted any report and if so, what are the recommendations of the Committee; and

(b) what action Government propose to take on the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI N. KANUNGO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Report of the Committee is under consideration. It will not be desirable to publish the recommendations of the Committee at this stage as they are more in the nature of tentative conclusions drawn after a rapid survey of the field.

DISCUSSION AT G.A.T.T. MEETING

*357. SHRI BABUBHAI CHINAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the nature of discussions that recently took place at the meeting of