

(f) expenditure incurred by the Chairman for his official tours inside and outside the country since he assumed the office?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) to (f). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

**O&NGC contract with Iran for Oil Exploration**

3256. SHRI SAMAR GUHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to a report published in 'Times of India' on 7th April, 1977 to the effect that O&NGC withdraws from an oil exploration contract with Iraq after spending rupees eight crores;

(b) if so, the reasons for wasteful expenditure of such big amount;

(c) the nature of contract entered into with Iraq and the Indian agency responsible for such contract; and

(d) whether an inquiry will be instituted to examine the background of Indo-Iraq oil exploration contract in order to ascertain reasons for failure of such contract?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exploration for oil anywhere is a risky venture and without surveys drilling and testing it cannot be known whether oil in commercially viable quantity is present or not; in this context it is not quite correct that any expenditure incurred in oil exploration has been wasteful.

(c) Under the service contract signed on 22-8-1973, the ONGC was to render specified technical, financial and commercial services to Iraq National Oil Company (INOC) in respect of the exploration for, and the exploitation of petroleum in an area of 3175 Sq. Kms. in Iraq, as well as the marketing of the petroleum produced therefrom etc. In the event of commercial discovery and production, all cost would be recoverable from INOC, and the ONGC would be remunerated for its services through its right to purchase certain specified quantities of crude oil produced from the area at a concessional "guaranteed sale price."

(d) Does not arise.

**Cases pending in Supreme Court and High Courts**

3257. SHRI SAMAR GUHA Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) number of cases pending with the Supreme Court and High Courts till 30th March, 1977 for the last five years;

(b) the reasons for delay in administering justice in such pending cases; and

(c) the policy of the Janata Government in regard to desirability of quick disposal of cases before such courts?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHANTI BHUSHAN): (a) The information in respect of cases pending with the High Courts as on 30-3-1977 is not available. A Statement giving the number of cases pending for more than 5 years in the Supreme Court on 1-4-1977 and High Courts on 31-12-1976 is placed on the table of the House.

(b) Though several factors are responsible for arrears in High Courts.