

(b) the amount spent on modernisation of loco shed and carriage factories in Ajmer during the last three years and the modifications carried out accordingly;

(c) the nature of the works being performed at present in those units; and

(d) the number of workers and officers working there at present and the details of their profit and loss during the last three years?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Seven—consisting of Workshop and attached units. Maintenance of assets and safety of workers is by respective Railway departments i.e. Civil, Electrical, Mechanical etc.

(b) In the last three years Rs. 19.11 crores have been spent in expansion and improvements to Diesel Loco, Carriage and Wagon POH and support facilities.

(c) Overhaul of steam and diesel locomotives, coaches, wagons; repairs and manufacture of sub assemblies and components and other supporting activities required for Railway workshop operations.

(d) 10534 workers and 35 officers. The above Railway units function as service departments and there is no system of their separate profit & loss accountal.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, previously Ajmer was a very important station from the point of view of the Railways. Its Locoshed and Carriage factories were next in importance to Bombay only on the Western Railway. But this station has been neglected for the past some years. Previously the number of workers employed in the Locoshed and Carriage factories was high but it continues to come down now. Presently only 10,534

workers and 35 officials are left there. Will the hon. Minister tell me why this has happened?...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. SPEAKER: You cannot make a speech. Ask your question.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Sir, my question is what are the reasons for the continuous disregard of Ajmer city by the Railways which is leading to constant decline in the Locoshed and Carriage Factories situated there?

[English]

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, whatever personnel are required that have been employed. There is no shortage of the workers, as hon. Member has expressed.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was stated that Rs. 19.11 crore have been spent. I want to know how much funds have been allocated this year and for the next two years for the expansion of Loco and Carriage facilities and in what way these facilities would be expanded?

MR. SPEAKER: The amount of funds allocated this year can be seen in this year's Budget. He cannot say anything now about the amount of funds to be allocated next year.

[English]

I am disallowing it.

Development of Oil Fields

+

*314. SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

SHRI LOKANATH CHAUDHURY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Information on petro-

leum wells suppressed by ONGC" appearing in The Statesman dated July 12, 1991;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof and the reasons for suppressing the information with the Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the action taken against the persons involved; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to develop these fields and the benefits likely to accrue therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR): (a) and (b) There has been no suppression of information by ONGC. The news report is speculative and not based on facts.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Kathana-Kalamsar area is already under oil production producing about 100 tonnes per day.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Sir, is the Minister aware about the exploration of oil in West Bengal? There was a meeting between Shri Praddep Dasgupta, the Dean of Geology, Calcutta University and ONGC and it was promised that exploration of oil by ONGC will start again. May I know what is the situation prevailing now?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, I have already answered in the main question that the prognosticated research which Shri K. C. Roychoudhary has claimed through newspaper reports and statements are highly speculative and figment of imagination. As far as West Bengal is concerned, we have already drilled 40 wells...*(Interruptions)* Three are under drilling Golf Green-one, Rajganj-one and Ichapur-one. There has not been any clear finding of commercially exploitable hydro carbon research. The drilling in West Bengal is continuing.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: My second question is whether the Minister is aware of it that in West Bengal one has to go deep down because of peculiarity of the oil formation rocks under the sea. It is like Saudi Arabia. Therefore, finance needed is a little more. This is where you are failing. Shri Satya Prakash Malviya is not here. He gave me a word that this will be taken up. I would like to know whether the present Government will continue that and go deep down, and supply of financial resources can be augmented by us.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that the ONGC has taken all the parameters in consideration, in maximising results in the West Bengal explorations. Even then experts have recently suggested that the drilling be stopped in a particular well, the ONGC itself has taken the decision to drill the well deeper. But the prognosticated resources as indicated in the main question are widely exaggerated. Within the technical parameters under which the ONGC functions, it shall be our effort to see that all prognosticated resources in West Bengal are fully exploited. We have already dug forty wells, as I said, and we have already spent in West Bengal around Rs. 594 crores for exploration, even though we have not been able to commercially exploit any oil or gas in the region.

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY: Sir, in the same news item, it is said that drilling was done in 24 Parganas and that well was destroyed and no inspection according to the standards had taken place. I want to know whether this fact is correct or incorrect, and also whether the Minister has looked into it. In the news item itself, he has said that two wells were drilled which were destroyed and no inspection was made. I want to know what is the fact. Part (b) of my question is that if at all in that area the geology study indicates that there is enough of oil, then what is the difficulty to go beyond the parameters and find out and drill oil which is so

scarce in the country today, as the news reveals?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, as regards the hon. Member's supplementary part (a) his information is incorrect. All necessary technical inspections have been conducted in this particular case. As regards the second matter, the hon. Member is basing his query on the newspaper report. This particular gentleman Shri Roychoudhary, who is a retired Superintending Geologist of the ONGC, has been talking to the Press and according to technical experts and what according to practical realities as found during explorations, is hypothesis on figments of imagination he is airing them through the Press. Prognosticated resources in West Bengal, for instance in this particular belt which he claims, is more than the prognosticated resources which have been identified in the whole of India. Similarly, he is making claims with respect to Gujarat in a particular well which is more than what is in the whole of that basin. So, his statement is highly exaggerated...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: How does he know that? This is a very serious matter...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Well, I will answer this...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please address the Chair and you will avoid that difficulty.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: We are also addressing you, Sir...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you a supplementary.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, the ONGC as well as the Ministry of Petroleum have gone deeply into whatever claims have been made by this Mr. Roychoudhary. We have got detailed reports of all the exploratory

activities with all the technical data. We have got the opinion of the Soviet experts, we have got the opinion of several technical committees which have gone into this whole question. I have got sound technical opinions in this file which show that the claims made by Shri Roychoudhary are exaggerated. I have all the records with me.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Sir, I am not speaking about any particular claim regarding K. C. Roychoudhary or Pradeep Dasgupta or for that matter any other geologist of great eminence of our country, I am speaking about the reports coming out since early 50's. Experts have declared that West Bengal is floating on oil. Even very recently a seminar was held at Calcutta which was attended by the then Minister of Petroleum Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy. In the presence of the hon. Minister and the Chief Minister of West Bengal and all other dignitaries all the scientists present there said that there is a crude reserve in West Bengal and Gujarat. I am mentioning the preliminary estimates according to which the oil reserve is around 28.5 billion tons which means that 2,850 crore tons of reserve. That much of reserves can make India an oil-exporting country instead of an oil-importing country. May I know from the hon. Minister that in view of all these claims made by all these great and eminent geologists of the country, whether he is prepared to submit a White Paper in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister will address the Chair.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: I do not want to disappoint the hon. Member. Nor do I want to be disappointed nor does the Ministry want to be disappointed. I have already said that drilling is continuing in West Bengal. *(Interruptions)* The capacity of 28.5 billion tons of exploitable reserve. The figure mentioned by the hon. Member is the same figure given by Shri K. C. Ray Chaudhury in 'STATESMAN'. I have

already said that it is more than the total prognosticated reserves in all basins of the country. (*Interruptions*) We are giving special attention to West Bengal and we shall spare no efforts to see that if there is any oil in West Bengal it will be exploited by the ONGC. West Bengal will get very high priority. That is one of the States where drilling has been continued in spite of the fact that no commercial oil has been found so far. But the drilling is continuing in full strength. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: It seems to me that the hon. Minister, the Ministry of Petroleum and the ONGC are all very much allergic to the very name of Shri Ray Chaudhury. How can the hon. Minister dismiss that all the claims of Shri Ray Chaudhury are highly speculative? How can you claim that the quantum that he has mentioned is highly excessive and that is why you should dismiss it? It seems to me that there is a certain vested interest that seems to ensure that India remains in perpetual deficiency. You are drilling elsewhere than the specified areas mentioned by Shri Ray Chaudhury. Why it is so? This is a very important question. In view of the petroleum crisis and the excessive payments we are making for the import of oil, I think that if such kinds of claims are made, it is the duty of the House to see whether there is any truth in it and go deep in it and the claim should not be dismissed.

AN HON. MEMBER: And even deep into the soil. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Did you ask a question?

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will put that suggestion into a question form.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: Sir, I made a very specific question. Shri Ray Chaudhury has suggested that a particular area has to

be drilled. My question is whether the Government is going to undertake drilling in that area?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this country needs more oil. We need oil. All that the country expects is, O.N.G.C. or any other organisation in the Government, should be interested in producing oil from this country other than importing from abroad. I very much appreciate the concern of the hon. Members of West Bengal. (*Interruptions*) May I say one word? If wishes were horses everyone would ride. (*Interruptions*) This gentleman, Shri K. C. Ray Chaudhury was an official in ONGC. He retired. To my information he was just an ordinary employee. He was not an eminent journalist. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: You denigrate somebody as you do not want him to probe.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I am coming to that.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: What is the need of saying that he was an ordinary employee? (*Interruptions*) How does that matter whether he was a common employee or not?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Because on his press statement the House is engaged in this discussion, it is very important.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: It is a very serious matter. Why the Minister is allergic to that man, I want to know. (*Interruptions*)

You have to go yourself. You call a meeting of the Ministers and the Members concerned.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, you allow Half-an-Hour discussion on this.

MR. SPEAKER: You give a notice, we will see.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Mr. Speaker, as I said, he was an employec of the ONGC. Nobody disputes that he was an employee of this organisation. We go on the surveys, investigations, observations and studies made by the ONGC experts, no less than the Soviet experts and French experts. They have gone deep into the matter. According to their own tasks, they have gone deeper into the matter and according to that survey, drilling is going on in West Bengal. Let there not be an impression carried in the minds of the Members from West Bengal that we are discriminating as far as the exploratory activities are concerned with regard to this area of the country. I totally refute the allegation made by the hon. Members that we are not taking proper steps as far as exploratory activities there are concerned. I totally refute it.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: What is the way out, you tell me. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL: Prof. R. C. Fuloria of the Oil India has also said the same thing. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Give notice for Half-an-Hour discussion. Now, Shrimati Malini Bhattacharya.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Of the two oil wells that were mentioned by the hon. Member Shri Lokanath Choudhury, one was in Diamond Harbour which was abandoned in 1984, and the other is in Boral, South 24-Parganas, which happens to fail in my constituency.....

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: Another well is in my constituency. *(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: I am not depending on

newspaper reports. I have got direct knowledge of this. So, I would like to know when these two oil wells were abandoned, whether the ONGC made inquiry about it and if there was enquiry whether that report will be laid on the Table of the House. Let it be made public. If there is no underhand dealing here, there should not be any objection to these papers being laid on the Table of the House.

SHRI KRISHAN KUMAR: There is no under-hand dealing or anything at all. The Diamond Harbour well was dug.....

MR. SPEAKER: If you have a report, are you ready to place it on the Table of the House?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: He is explaining.

SHRI KRISHAN KUMAR: I am explaining that the Diamond Harbour well was dug up to a depth of 5,500 ft. and the available drilling and seismic data indicates that this particular strata is too tight to hold any commercial accumulations of oil. That is the finding in the report. Similarly, drilling in no well has been stopped in West Bengal except on proper technical conclusions. As the Cabinet Minister has said, it does not mean that drilling in West Bengal is not continuing on a vigorous basis. We have been drilling in West Bengal *(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, the hon. Minister has told the House that drilling would be continued in the West Bengal basin. That is a good news. But may I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that a number of wells which were drilled have been abandoned recently, namely, Bodra, Deganga and some other wells in Nadiya district. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is agreeable to place the report about all those wells which have been abandoned for the information of the House?

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, a well is abandoned only when it is conclusively proved that it is dry and any further investment will be a waste.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, I have asked about some specific cases.

SHRI S. KRISHAN KUMAR: Sir, we can make available to the hon. Members the information that we have on this matter.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Availability of Lignite

*306. **DR. P. VALLAL PERUMAN:** Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the places where lignite resources are available in the country;

(b) the quantity available in different places and when these are likely to be mined;

(c) whether the Government have any proposal to set up a National Commission for Lignite Mining and the allied thermal generation at Neyveli; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The important known occurrences of lignite in India, by and large, are confined to Neyveli, Jayamkondam and environs in Tamil Nadu, Bahur in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu, Panandhro in Gujarat, Palana, Gurha, Barsingsar, Kapurdhi, Jalipu, Merta Road in Rajasthan and Nichahom in Jammu & Kashmir; besides sporadic occurrences reported in certain areas of Tanjore and Ramnad districts of Tamil Nadu, Alleppey, Varkala, Cannanore, etc. in Kerala and Rathnagiri, Sindudurg districts in Maharashtra.

The lignite reserves in the country has been currently estimated at about 6500 million tonnes. The state-wise distribution is as follows:—

State	Area	Million Tonnes
Tamilnadu	Neyveli	3,300
	Jayamkondam	1,150
	Bahur-Pondicherry	580
Gujarat	Panandhro, Lakhpat, etc.	585
Rajasthan	Palana, Barsingsar,	
	Kapurdhi, etc.	870
Jammu & Kashmir		90
Kerala		100
	(to be proved by detailed exploration)	
	Total	6,473
		say
		6,500