

technical opinion favours deep drilling for sustained explorations; and

(c) if so, the reasons for not carrying out sustained operations?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA):

(a) to (c). Geological and Geophysical surveys including detailed seismic surveys have been carried out in on-shore Cauvery Basin for more than 15 years now. 28 wells have so far been drilled but no commercial accumulation of Hydro-Carbons has been discovered. Though presently, there is no immediate programme for drilling in Cauvery On-shore, more sophisticated seismic surveys in the area are proposed to be undertaken in the current year's field season. Further drilling there would depend on the results of these surveys. In the Offshore Cauvery Basin, an exploratory well is currently under drilling in the Gulf of Mannar.

Shifting of Southern Region Office of O. & N.G.C.

347. SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state the reasons for shifting of the office of the Southern Region of O. & N.G.C. from Karaikal beyond Hyderabad?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): The Oil and Natural Gas Commission has no Southern Region but only a Project named Cauvery Project with Headquarters at Madras, and a base office at Karaikal for drilling operations at Karaikal. Both the Madras and Karaikal offices are still functioning. In order to undertake drilling operations in Krishna Godavari Basin of Andhra Pradesh, a base office at Rajamundri is proposed to be opened. The Project office at Madras will continue for the present, having

jurisdiction over both the Karaikal base office and Rajamundri base office.

Role of Multi-national Drug Companies

348. SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the role of the multi-national drug companies in the production and distribution of medical drugs in the country;

(b) whether Government have examined that the prices of drugs as charged by these firms are reasonable and within the reach of the common people; and

(c) if not, the concrete steps proposed to be taken against exploitation of a vital human need?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI H. N. BAHUGUNA): (a) Multi-national drug companies with foreign equity exceeding 40 per cent in India produce both bulk drugs and formulations and their contribution is about 28 per cent in the production of bulk drugs and 55 per cent in the production of formulations. Like other companies, Multi-National drug companies also distribute the medicines produced by them through the normal trade outlets.

(b) and (c). The prices of drugs are statutorily controlled under the provisions of Drug (Prices Control) Order, 1970. The Order provides for a mechanism for fixation of prices. Small-scale units having turnover not exceeding Rs. 50 lakhs are exempt from the purview of the said Order. Prices once notified by the Government cannot be revised by the manufacturers without the prior approval of the Government. Through the operation of this Order, it has been possible to maintain the